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Consuming the Bodies of Slaves

Metaphors of Cannibalism in British Anti-Slavery Campaigns to Abstain from West Indian Sugar in the 1790s

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Abstracts

English

In the early 1790s, British anti-slavery activists propagated the abstention from West Indian produce to provoke the abolition of the slave trade by way of empowering the populace. In doing so, they applied two strategies which centred on the consumers' and slaves' bodies. First, the campaigners construed the consumption of sugar as violating British ideals like liberty and virtue; second, they evoked images of cannibalism and exploited a sanguinary rhetoric. This thesis analyses the boycott movement and its utilisation of metaphors of cannibalism and blood to subsequently interpret the meaning of the abolitionists' strategy of imagining cannibalism. I demonstrate that these metaphors referred to a number of discourses such as the empowerment of the bourgeoisie in the context of a declining political and economical system.

Deutsch

In den frühen 1790er Jahren propagierten britische Abolitionisten den Konsumboykott von Zucker und Rum aus der Karibik um über diese Maßnahme, die dem Volk und seinen Konsumentscheidungen große Macht zusprach, die Abschaffung des Slavenhandels herbeizuführen. Zu diesem Zweck verfolgten sie zwei Strategien, die die Körper der europäischen Konsumenten und der afrikanischen Sklaven in den Mittelpunkt rückten. Die Gegner der Sklaverei konstruierten den Konsum von Zucker als einen Angriff auf britische Werte wie Freiheit und Tugendhaftigkeit, zusätzlich verglichen sie den Konsum mit Kannibalismus und nutzten eine blutrünstige Rhetorik. Diese Arbeit untersucht die Boykottbewegung und den Einsatz von Kannibalismus- und Blutmetaphern um anschließend deren Bedeutung zu analysieren. Ich zeige, dass diese Metaphern eine Referenz auf verschiedene Diskurse der Zeit bilden, wie etwa die Ermächtigung der bürgerlichen Klasse vor dem Hintergrund eines politischen und wirtschaftlichen Systemwechsels.

Chapter 1

Personal Perspective

> "... in every pound of sugar used, we may be considered as consuming six ounces of human flesh"—William Fox[1]

I first came in touch with the abstention movement of the 1790s when I took a research seminar conducted by my supervisor Martina Kaller-Dietrich. The seminar dealt with the history of food in the theoretical context of global history. I started to take an interest in a research question concerning sugar since it is a commodity that is, from a historical perspective, deeply connected to global processes and interactions. Owing to Sidney W. Mintz's *Sweetness and Power*, sugar is regarded as a product that encouraged European industrialisation and changed Western taste effectively. This change in European productivity and consumer behaviour happened at the expense of slaves as a good portion of cane sugar was produced on West Indian plantations whose crop was based on slave work.

Regarding today's discourse surrounding Fair trade and the attitude towards slavery which is still associated with the transatlantic slave system, I wondered if the consumption of slave grown sugar had been subject of moral considerations at some point. Researching this question led me to the boycott of West Indian sugar in the 1790s. British abolitionists initiated a boycott of sugar from the West Indies in order to force British economy to abolish the slave trade; the boycott was revived in the 1820s to end slavery itself. While these boycott movements did not succeed as a means to abolish the slave trade or slavery, they still represented a success in terms of empowering the bourgeoisie.

I drew my attention to the first boycott movement to outline the period under research. Also, the second movement represents a revival of the first movement; hence, the first campaign appeared more interesting to me. The campaign addressed the consumers of West Indian sugar and

[1] Fox (1791): *An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Utility of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum* p. 4 (see 4.3.1)

aimed at convincing them to abstain from the commodity produced by slave labour. The campaigners argued that the consumers were the prime mover of the market; hence, their demand was supposed to account for the events surrounding the transatlantic slave trade. According to the campaigners, the slave trade would be abolished as soon as the production of sugar proved to be unprofitable. Some activists approved the consumption of East Indian sugar; however, the majority advocated the abstention from sugar at all as the *East India Company* was not considered to guarantee anti-slavery politics. Thus, the boycott movement appropriated the term abstention to signify selflessness and to achieve Abolition.

I will use the terms boycott and abstention synonymously. The movement of the late eighteenth century applied the term abstention since the term boycott did not emerge until the 1880s. Nevertheless, I will use the term as it illustrates the link to today's understanding of consumer boycotts. The boycott may also be described as consumer action or consumer protest indicating that the boycott was not imposed by the government. Contemporaries referred to the activists of the abstention movement as *anti-saccharites* as several sources suggest.

The boycott of West Indian sugar rested upon the assumption that the consumers' choices manipulated the whole market and consequently politics. It referred to the emerging consumer society and formed a critique of slavery and colonialism and thus one of Britain's predominant modes of production. The reasoning of the activists aroused my interest: They pointed out that global political and economical processes affected the individual which was in turn construed as the prime mover of these processes. Owing to the subject, the campaigners pretended to argue on moral grounds; however, they employed a strategy which suggested that the consumers of West Indian produce would ingest the slaves' flesh and other bodily substances. The citation quoted at the beginning illustrates the bizarre exploitation of this argument.

The employment of metaphors of cannibalism in reference to the consumption of slave grown sugar refers to a number of discourses; however, the aspect of a bodily pollution fascinated me most for two reasons. First, these metaphors aimed at making politics in utilising the bodies of European consumers and African slaves and implied racialised perceptions. Thus, the colonial periphery and the British motherland were linked by dint of its protagonists' bodies. Second, these images of cannibalism and bodily pollution centre on the bodies of the consumers; hence, they focus on the purity of the consumers rather than the slaves' suffering. Therefore, the discourse did not simply negotiate concepts of justice and self-determination but promoted ideas of cleanliness to reach political goals. The subject of cannibalism represented an extreme of human nature that was appropriated to illustrate and equate it with the extremes of slavery and the slave trade. My term paper discussed the gender and racial stereotypes construed by

these metaphors and the abstention movement in general. This paper formed the starting point of my thesis; however, the focus shifted from a general discussion of the movement's reasoning to the employment of images of cannibalism. For my thesis, I spent six weeks in London to research at the British Library where I analysed primary sources and literature that were not available from libraries in Austria. The trip was partly funded through a grant from the Austrian *Federal Ministry of Science and Research.*[2]

Sugar did not constitute the only commodity produced in the context of slavery and colonialism; however, it represented the commodity which was, according to the campaigners, more labour intensive than any other produce. Accordingly, the activists of the abstention movement argued that sugar would require the attention of anti-slavery supporters first of all while the abstention from goods like cotton was considered to come second. Furthermore, sugar was not only associated with colonialism and slavery but also with the slave trade controlled by the British; thus, the production of sugar in the West Indies constituted a British project. The sugar beet was identified; however, it was not industrialised yet and hence left the production of cane sugar the only choice in producing sugar. Whenever I refer to West Indian sugar or produce, I include the commodity of rum; hence, the refusal of sugar implies discourses surrounding the consumption of alcohol.

The 1790s faced a number of subversive events such as the revolutions in France and Haiti which illustrated the decline of a system of power favouring the aristocracy. British politics turned to reactionary strategies in order to curb revolutionary sentiments; thus, the era was characterised by power struggles. The boycott of West Indian produce represented one of these struggles and constituted a movement with popular appeal following William Fox's pamphlet *An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Utility of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum* (see 4.3.1), published in 1791, which includes the aforementioned citation and to which I will refer to as *Address* in the following text.

To outline my research question, I will research the metaphors of cannibalism employed by British activists propagating the abstention from West Indian produce in the 1790s. In doing so, I will first focus on the campaigners pamphleteering the boycott as well as their network and reasoning to discuss implications of cannibalism afterwards. Subsequently, I will analyse the employment of metaphors of cannibalism in the context of popularising anti-slavery in referring to meanings of consuming human substances highlighting the role of a racialised discourse surrounding slavery. I will not ask for the validity of the images of cannibalism but analyse their cultural implications.

[2] *Förderungsstipendium nach dem Studienförderungsgesetz (StudFG) vom BM.W_f finanziert*, granted in June 2012.

Chapter 2

Theory and Method

2.1 Theoretical Approach

I will approach the topic from a sociocultural perspective concentrating on the cultural implications of the the sugar boycott. The British abolitionists of the late eighteenth century referred to the suffering of the slaves, arguing that it was incompatible with British values and morals. However, this humanitarian reasoning becomes less striking when the campaigners of the abstention movement invoke metaphors of cannibalism, drawing attention to the bodies of British consumers. Accordingly, it was crucial to me to choose a theory that involves the meaning of the body. Based on this thought and regarding the period I research, it seemed quite obvious to consider Michel Foucault. In addition, the theories of Foucault offer the possibility to analyse the body in relation to power.

On account of these considerations, I based my research on Foucault's *The Will to Knowledge*, the first edition of the series *The History of Sexuality*.[1] This survey examines Foucault's notion of power in relation to the meaning of sexuality in the eighteenth century. The suppression of sexuality in the modern era was often interpreted as a consequence of the exploitation of workers enforced by the capitalist division of labour. However, Foucault suggests that this suppression did not constitute a form of asceticism but rather an intensification of the body.[2]

He convincingly argues that capitalism promoted the normalisation and supervision of the human body. In order to comply with capitalist standards of the capitalist working ethic, people were obliged to subordinate their bodies to a process that would ensure its exploitation.[3] Foucault demonstrates that the national population turned into an issue of economical and political relevance during the eighteenth century; it represented a resource of workforce

[1] I will cite the German version *Der Wille zum Wissen (Sexualität und Wahrheit)*.
[2] Foucault (2008) p. 1122
[3] Foucault (2008) p. 1135

whose growth needed to be in balance with other resources.[4]

Foucault discusses the transformation of representing power on the basis of the body arguing that humans were increasingly regarded as vital bodies. He suggests that former periods determined power as the sovereign's potential to decide on death instancing death sentence and warfare while the bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century understood power as exercising control over their own bodies. In other words: the threat of murder was replaced by the responsibility for life.[5] This responsibility calls for the ideal care of the body to achieve the optimum of efficiency; thus, Foucault interprets this development as an intensification of the body involving the problematisation of health. The body and its function were categorised to achieve a standardised form of the healthy body which in turn was supposed to assure the continuance of power in terms of longevity and potent offspring.[6]

The suppression of sexuality proved to comply with the process of normalising the body and with exercising power in doing so. According to Foucault, this exertion of power is not determined by executing the law but rather by supervising the bodies of the middle classes. He points out that these new techniques of power constituted a form of middle-class empowerment: power was no longer simply performed by the legislation, but with the people's compliance with standards. The observation and normalisation of the body turned into instruments of abiding by these standards.[7]

Foucault argues that while sexuality constituted an issue that concerned the legislative, it was primarily determined by the middle-class, bodily abstention. This abstention was not imposed on the middle classes; rather, it served for their self-affirmation. They attributed a body to themselves that needed to be protected and isolated. Hence, the observation and the abstinence of the body represented a value and the surveillance of sexuality determined this value.[8] This self-affirmation was accompanied by what Foucault calls Biopolitics. This term refers to the governmental regulation of the people's bodies.[9] However, this aspect will be less important for my research.

Foucault demonstrates that the described development in perceiving the body was part of the emergence of the middle classes that replaced the aristocracy. He argues that the aristocracy was obsessed with parentage and blood while the middle classes centred on inheritance and sexuality.[10] The aspect of inheritance was subsequently connected to hygiene and racist

[4] Foucault (2008) p. 1146
[5] Foucault (2008) p. 1136
[6] Foucault (2008) p. 1122
[7] Foucault (2008) p. 1096
[8] Foucault (2008) p. 1123
[9] Foucault (2008) p. 1133
[10] Foucault (2008) p. 1123

considerations bearing fruit in the nineteenth century.[11]

To outline my considerations, I have chosen to base my research on Michel Foucault's "The Will to Knowledge" because it deals with the period I am analysing as well as with the aspects of power and body politics. As I will demonstrate in this thesis, the empowerment of the middle classes was crucial to the implementation of the abstention movement. Foucault argues that the declining aristocracy clinged to the aspect of ancestry and blood. I will show that the anti-slavery activists invoked the idea of a new era to displace the old order (see 4.4); accordingly, the theory of Foucault allows for the interpretation of the abolitionists' usage of a sanguinary rhetoric to refer to an archaic regime. Furthermore, Foucault demonstrates that to decide over life and death represented a form of ultimate power. Hence, boycotting West Indian sugar and rum permitted the middle classes to prevent the slaves' death by abstaining from sugar thus disciplining their own bodies.

2.2 Methodology

My analysis of the boycott movement, acquired during the research seminar mentioned in the introduction, formed the starting point of my thesis. My term paper discussed the subject from a perspective that was based on theories dealing with the emergence of consumer cultures including cultural implications as well as the link between production and consumption. I will pursue the research on cultural aspects in this thesis as my theoretical approach suggests. Accordingly, I have chosen literature that deals with the cultural implications of boycotting sugar and employing metaphors of cannibalism. I will introduce this literature in chapter 3 and further discuss it in chapter 4.

I analysed primary sources to get a better understanding of the abolitionists' arguments and the discourses involved in campaigning anti-slavery. I restricted the selection of primary sources to pamphlets proposing the abstention from West Indian sugar and employing metaphors of cannibalism; these pamphlets were available from the British Library.[12] I intend to examine two areas: First, the cultural, political and economical implications of the arguments; second, the background and network of the pamphleteers and their printers and sellers.

Thus, my research comprises of a cultural analysis and a more empirical part investigating the background of the anti-sugar campaigners.

[11] Foucault (2008) p. 1124

[12] The *Address* and *no rum!—no sugar! Or, The Voice of Blood* are also available at http://www.recoveredhistories.org/ (accessed October 2012)

Chapter 3

State of Research

When I first started my research, I split my research question into two topics: the boycott of West Indian produce itself and the meaning of cannibalism. However, I decided to sub-divide the first topic for the illustration of the state of the art to outline distinct research areas. The first section (see 3.1) discusses with the boycott of West Indian produce itself. I distinguished the sugar boycott from the abolition movement to accentuate the research on it and to establish it as a research topic of its own. The second section (see 3.2) deals with the abolition movement in general including perceptions of slavery while the last section (see 3.3) covers the meaning and perceptions of cannibalism.

I restricted the selection in this chapter to key literature that was essential for my research. On grounds of my training as a historian I did favour historical works; however, my research question required to approach secondary material originating from other disciplines. Owing to my topic, English language and literature studies proved to be an essential source of research. While this research was invaluable for my work and promoted my emphasis on cultural aspects, it has to be noted that analyses on the sugar boycott lack detailed research by historians.

3.1 The Sugar Boycott

Most of the works written on the anti-slavery movement of the late eighteenth century refer to the sugar boycott somehow; still, it is hardly researched as a topic of its own. Usually the campaign to abstain from slave grown sugar is treated as an aspect of the abolition movement's ability to engage in popular politics, illustrating its methods. As such, the boycott is described to be a clever move of the British abolitionists, reaching for the common people and involving them in political decision making.

The importance of the boycott movement is underlined by its success

considering the distribution of William Fox's pamphlet *An Address*. According to the circulation of the pamphlet, the boycott was joined by up to 300.000 families.[1] Nevertheless, there is no empirical research on the boycott movement, evaluating its impact on British economy and politics. Some scholars refer to the difficulty of estimating the sales of sugar from the West Indies due to the events in France and its colonies. The revolutionary revolts in France and Saint-Domingue changed the demand for sugar in Continental Europe, at the same time sugar was short in Britain and prices rose. Thus, the request for West Indian sugar was not manipulated by the sugar boycott exclusively.[2] This explains the lack of empirical research to some extend. Also, the politics of the abstention movement did not cause the abolition of the slave trade immediately; hence, it may not be considered to be rewarding as a topic of research.

This section comprehends the key literature that I have used for my research paper on which this diploma thesis is based on. Hence, it represents the starting point of my thesis. There is a strong emphasis on gender history due to the fact that the campaigners of the abstention movement favoured women as decision makers in consumption patterns of households; moreover, women were construed as the more sensible sex, thus more amenable to anti-slavery sentiments. While my thesis deals with the abstention movement of the 1790s, some of the scholars listed above also analyse the boycott of the 1820s. However, all of the arguments mentioned in the following section refer to the movement of the 1790s.

The historian Clare Midgley explored the sugar boycott in her study on women's activism against slavery. After having analysed the subject in *Women against Slavery: British Campaigns, 1780-1870* (Routledge, 1992), she reexamined it years later in *Feminism and Empire: British Campaigns, 1780-1870* (Routledge, 2007). In the first study, Midgley stresses the crucial role of women within the abstention movement. She examines the connection between women's activism against slavery and the struggle for the rights of women, arguing that the abstention from West Indian sugar offered women an arena to engage in politics and to advocate their own rights by emphasising the universal rights of men. Furthermore, she demonstrates that women were supposed to be responsible for nurturing their families, consequentially it seemed appropriate for the campaigners of the boycott movement to address women in particular. Above all, consumption was attributed to women. While the consumption of colonial luxury goods was associated with female indulgence, the abstention from slave grown sugar was connoted to self-denial and humanity. Thus, the boycott of slave grown sugar was connected to images of female virtue. Midgley argues that even though the abstention

[1] While most scholars refer to estimations of about 300.000 copies of the *Address*, it is quite unclear whether this number takes into account individuals or families.

[2] Drescher (1986) p. 79, Midgley (1992), p. 40

movement did not succeed in abolishing the slave trade, it did constitute an achievement in terms of raising awareness for the individual responsibility for slavery. In her second study, Midgley refers to the research of Charlotte Sussman and Deirdre Coleman and embraces their arguments. There she highlights the aspect of a ritualised politeness surrounding the consumption of tea. Tea in turn was associated with sugar; hence, the consumption of sugar needed to be disassociated from rituals of politeness. Midgley suggests that activists of the abstention movement linked the consumption of sugar to hypocrisy and barbarity to challenge common conceptions of politeness.

Charlotte Sussman wrote a pathbreaking book on consumer action in the context of colonialism. In *Consuming Anxieties. Consumer Protest, Gender & British Slavery, 1713-1833* she analyses the attitude towards (anti-) colonialism and consumerism. Sussman argues that while both phenomenona are well researched, they are not yet connected adequately. Thus, she advocates an examination that analyses the interdependency of anti-colonial sentiments and consumer protest. Attention should be paid to the fact that anti-colonialism and anti-slavery are often used synonymously. Coming from a literature studies background, Sussman turns her attention to literary texts; however, she also refers to political discourses. The fourth chapter, *Women and the Politics of Sugar, 1792*[3] is dedicated to the sugar boycott and deals with gender stereotypes evoked by the abstention movement. Sussman points out that the campaigners of the sugar boycott created a domestic sphere to oppose the political realm. She convincingly argues that this domestic sphere represented the home of the family as well as the territorial space of Britain and uses the term 'domestic' to refer to the twofold meaning. This domestic sphere was supposed to manipulate the governmental politics according to the concept of the abstention campaigners; moreover, this sphere was attributed to women. In this way, women were construed to be the protectors of the family and the British territory, guided by their virtue. Correspondingly, female virtue became a key argument of the abstention movement.

Deirdre Coleman is a literary critic who wrote a paper on the boycott movement entitled *Conspicuous Consumption: White Abolitionism and English Women's Protest Writing in the 1790s*. She also stresses the aspect of a domestic sphere that is supposed to be the realm of women; other than Sussman, she does connect perceptions of gender to racial stereotypes and racism. Coleman argues that images of the dark continent of Africa are analogous to perceptions of a dark female sexuality. She associates these notions with the abolitionists' phobia concerning freed slaves, a phobia that led to the settlement of slaves in Sierra Leone. Coleman points out that the metaphors of cannibalism employed in anti-sugar campaigns refer to the paranoia surrounding the liberation of slaves. While anti-slavery campaigners lobbied for it, they were also anxious about it. Coleman argues that the

[3]This chapter was published as an article in *Representations*, Vol. 48, in 1994.

metaphors of cannibalism constitute a sexual metaphor representing the fear relating to the possibility of a racial amalgamation once the slaves were freed. Furthermore, she interprets these metaphors as an inversion of a colonial discourse, holding a mirror up to the colonising society. This way, the European consumer becomes the actual savage who has no right to judge the African.

Carl Plasa, a scholar of English literature, deals with the sugar boycott and the metaphors of cannibalism in his paper *Stained with Spots of Human Blood*[4]. He criticises the fact, that previous analyses concentrate exclusively on the writing of white abolitionists. He counters with the example of the black abolitionist and former slave Oloudah Equiano who wrote a book on his life entitled 'The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself (1789)'. In the text, Equiano reverses racial stereotypes when he reveals his and his fellow slaves' fear to be eaten by European seamen. This fear results from Equiano's belief in European cannibals and challenges European conceptions of racialised attributions by changing the observer's perspective. Furthermore, Plasa endorses Coleman's interpretation of a sexualised discourse on slavery when he refers to sugar as allegorising sperm.

Mimi Sheller, who was trained in history, literature, and sociology, analyses the boycott movement in a paper. *Bleeding Humanity and Gendered Embodiments: From Antislavery Sugar Boycotts to Ethical Consumers* offers a survey of the sugar boycott covering the religious background of the abstention movement and referring to transatlantic Quaker networks. Sheller argues that contemporary discourses on consumerism and humanitarian action originate from this era's abstention movements. Like their pioneers, today's discourses would reproduce racial and sexual hierarchies.

Timothy Morton is a scholar of English literature who wrote an essay on the boycott movement and its usage of metaphors of cannibalism. *Blood Sugar* primarily deals with poems of various artists and the work of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Morton draws the attention to religious and economic aspects by referring to the Christian transubstantiation and to capitalism as devouring humanity.

The Anglist Timothy Whelan does not examine the sugar boycott itself but two of its campaigners: William Fox and Martha Gurney (see 4.2). These two activists played a crucial role in popularising the abstention from slave grown sugar; hence, Whelan's research was invaluable to analyse the movement's network and course of action. Whelan demonstrates the importance of Fox and Gurney in a paper entitled *William Fox, Martha Gurney, and Radical Discourse of the 1790s* as well as in the introduction to

[4]The title refers to a citation in Fox's *Address*: "A French writer justly observes, *That he cannot look on a piece of sugar without conceiving it stained with spots of human blood.*", p. 4 (see 4.3.1).

The Political Writing of William Fox: Abolitionist, Tory, and Friend to the French Revolution.

Based on this research, I analysed racial and gender stereotypes exploited by the abstention movement. I claimed that the movement construed women as virtuous and sentient decision makers of home consumption in the context of a racialised and sexualised depiction of slaves evoking images of bodily pollution.

3.2 The British Abolition Movement and Slavery in the Late Eighteenth Century

The history of the British abolition movement and the transatlantic slave trade are well researched. In 1944 Eric Williams published his groundbreaking study *Capitalism and Slavery*, a book that changed the way in which anti-slavery efforts were and still are perceived by historians. He argues that while slavery first enabled the rise of capitalism, it subsequently became incompatible with capitalism. Thus, Williams links the abolition of slavery to the implementation of industrial capitalism, rejecting the idea of humanity as the prime mover of abolition.

Seymour Drescher follows this premise in *Capitalism and Antislavery. British Mobilization in Comparative Perspective* and states that "British abolition is not merely 'too good to be true', but too true to be good".[5] Drescher suggests that anti-slavery propaganda employed a number of stereotypes that pretended to be a matter of slavery when in fact they were dealing with discourses of British industrialisation such as the destruction of family and sexual relationships in the industrialised cities. Slavery represented an extreme of labour relations which served the abolitionists to debate working conditions in Britain. Accordingly, Drescher argues that anti-slavery activists were concerned with free labour rather than freedom. Furthermore, he points out that the anti-slavery campaign empowered the less powerful while the Parliamentary elite was just reacting to the politics of the middle classes.

John R. Oldfield discusses the organisation of abolitionist propaganda in *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilisation of Public Opinion against the Slave Trade, 1787-1807* and in a paper that specifically deals with the *London Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, entitled *The London Committee and Mobilization of Public Opinion against the Slave Trade.* He empirically analyses the organisation and commercialisation of anti-slavery efforts and interprets Abolitionism as a means of stabilising Britain's national identity after having lost its American colonies by referring to the British ideal of liberty.

[5] Drescher (1986) p. 165. The quote refers to David Brion Davis's study *Slavery and Human Progress.*

Christopher Leslie Brown explores the abolitionists' motivation to fight slavery in his book *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism.* He argues that slavery had been a moral problem for some time before it turned into a scope of activism at the end of the eighteenth century. Consequently, Brown asks why slavery emerged as an urgent problem at that time. He argues that abolitionists were actually aiming at reducing the influence of slavery and slaves on British society since they represented a threat to the social order which was supposed to be based on British ideals like liberty. In claiming that religion proved to be more promising than the legislative in fighting slavery, Brown demonstrates that moral capital turned into a key argument of political agency.

In *Bloody Romanticism. Spectacular Violence and the Politics of Representation, 1776-1832* Ian Haywood argues that the Romantic period was affected by what he calls the *bloody vignette.* Haywood uses this term to illustrate the fact that while Romanticism and anti-slavery in particular are associated with concepts like sensibility and humanity, they were in fact influenced by images of spectacular violence evoked by discourses surrounding slavery and revolutionary events. In this context, spectacular refers to the dimension of violence as well as to the illustration of violence as a spectacle. This is obvious from various abolitionist depictions of slavery. Haywood demonstrates that these depictions do not represent a simple relationship between victim and perpetrator but include a third protagonist, the observer. The observer constitutes the significant characteristic of this constellation since he or she is supposed to act upon the injustice witnessed as a consumer of abolitionist propaganda. Haywood points out that this propaganda equated slavery with blasphemous figures such as the *Gothic Eucharist* in reference to the metaphors of cannibalism employed by the boycott movement.

Brycchan Carey analyses the way in which the Abolition movement adopted a rhetoric of sensibility to persuade the people of anti-slavery sentiments in his book *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility: Writing, Sentiment, and Slavery, 1760-1807.* Unlike the scholars mentioned above, Carey is not a historian but a literary critic; correspondingly, he focuses on the texts produced by abolitionists. Carey argues that anti-slavery activists used a rhetoric figure which he characterises as virtue in distress. This figure was supposed to galvanise the people on grounds of their sense of justice.

3.3 Cannibalism

The subject of cannibalism constitutes a distinct field of study; hence, I will not be able to cover the full range of research. In this section, I will introduce the literature on the subject that was most important to my

research and that will be discussed in chapter 5.

The Italian historian Piero Camporesi wrote a book on cultural implications of blood entitled *Juice of Life: The Symbolic and Magic Significance of Blood*.[6] Since blood was essential to the rhetoric of anti-slavery campaigners, this book proved to be invaluable for my research. Camporesi analyses the meaning of blood in Western culture referring to medical and cultural perceptions of blood.

Maggie Kilgour's *From Communion to Cannibalism. An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* deals with depictions of cannibalism in literary texts. The scholar of literature approaches the subject from a highly theoretical angle construing a framework that rests upon food as a basic model of internalisation and incorporation.

Jan Nederveen Pieterse analyses European stereotypes of Africa and black people in *White on Black. Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture*. He addresses the cliché of the African cannibal in a chapter and discusses its implications. The sociologist and scholar of Global Studies focuses on interactions between Europe and Africa exploring its assimilation into Western culture.

[6] I will cite the German translation *Das Blut. Symbolik und Magie*.

Chapter 4

The Campaign to Abstain from Slave Grown Sugar

4.1 Popularising Anti-Slavery

The abolitionist movement aimed at lobbying Parliament to end the slave trade and eventually slavery itself. Yet, the abolitionists of the late eighteenth century did not rely on the political elite solely. They pursued a strategy of mobilising the public to put pressure on Parliament and engaged in a number of campaigns. The abstention from slave grown sugar from the West Indies constitutes only one form of popular activism.

In 1788 and 1792 anti-slavery activists launched petition campaigns to subsequently present them to Parliament. While these campaigns failed to lobby Parliament successfully, they still established anti-slavery as an issue that concerned the public. The first campaign generated more than 100 petitions and was even outreached by the succeeding campaign four years later which accounted for 519 petitions and involved about 400.000 signees.[1]

Petitioning Parliament represented a policy that was still deeply connected to traditional ways of engaging in politics; however, the activists of the abolitionist movement exploited methods far more innovative. They adopted a commercialisation of anti-slavery sentiments that covered a wide range of media.

The entrepreneur Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795) played a crucial role in popularising Abolitionism. He had been a member of the *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade* from its inception in 1787[2] and designed an emblem of a kneeling slave, decorated with the words *Am I not a Man and a Brother?*. This emblem became an iconic symbol of the anti-slavery movement; moreover, it made Abolitionism fashionable. In its

[1] Oldfield (1995) p. 1
[2] Oldfield (1995) p. 2

most common appearance the emblem was worn visibly on the body in the form of a medallion.[3] Originally, the medallion was supposed to be produced for the members of the *Society*; however, Wedgwood recognised its potential and produced it in large numbers.[4] Consequently, anti-slavery was not only a political and moral issue, but also a fashion statement. During the nineteenth century, women activists appropriated the medallion's engraving to *Am I not a Woman and a sister?*, referring to the popularity of the original medallion.[5] Mimi Sheller points out that the depiction of the kneeling slave supports abolitionist arguments: While pro-slavery activists described the slaves as a rebellious and sexual risk, the abolitionists were obliged to disprove these stereotypes. The account of the kneeling slave enabled the characterisation of the slave as a victim, incapable of action. This was a crucial factor since the depiction of an energetic slave could have been associated with revolutionary action and sexual violence, enforced by pro-slavery propaganda.[6] The emblem was not only commercialised in the form of what is usually referred to as the *Wedgwood-medallion* but in a number of imprints. The figure decorated posters and souvenirs like tokens and tableware[7]; the latter referring to the consumption of slave grown food.

The aspect of consuming food produced by slave labour leads to the actual topic of this thesis, the abstention from West Indian sugar. Quakers in Britain and North America had proposed the abstention from slave grown produce prior to the boycott movement of the 1790s. However, these abstention campaigns remained the ambition of a small group, limited to a religious minority.[8] William Fox's *Address* popularised the abstention from slave grown sugar and supported the abolitionist cause in a crucial phase of Parliamentary dispute. After Parliament had rejected the Bill to abolish the slave trade in 1791, anti-slavery activists extended the campaign to gain support for the Abolition movement. Already existing strategies of lobbying Parliament and mobilising the public were further enhanced.[9]

While Fox's *Address* is regarded as the most important stimulus of the sugar boycott, it was by no means the only source of the abstention movement's popularisation. The campaign was controlled by a number of protagonists who advocated the abstention from West Indian sugar with

[3] *British Museum* (2012): http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/pe_mla/a/anti-slavery_medallion,_by_jos.aspx (accessed October 2012)

[4] Oldfield (1995) p. 156

[5] Sheller (2011) p. 177

[6] Sheller (2011) p. 178

[7] *British Museum* (2012): http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/pe_mla/a/anti-slavery_medallion,_by_jos.aspx (accessed October 2012)

[8] Midgley (2007) p. 51

[9] Carey (2002): http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/wilberforce.htm (accessed October 2012)

various instruments. Nevertheless, all these instruments utilised by anti-slavery activists relied on the consumers' imagination to envision the horrors of slavery. I use the term consumer in this context to refer to his or her identity as a consumer of anti-slavery propaganda as well as a potential consumer of slave grown sugar. Charlotte Sussman argues that campaigners of anti-slavery sentiments adopted rhetorical methods to invoke action that were borrowed from literary discourse and that were associated with strategies applying sentimental and satirical elements.[10] These strategies can be found in texts like pamphlets, means of evidence and poems. Next to the *Wedgwood-medallion* and pamphlets, poems represented an important tool in popularising Abolitionism.[11]

The activists of the boycott movement addressed the consumers of West Indian produce; in other words, they did not lobby a political elite—at least not exclusively. The boycott referred to the emerging consumer society and was based on the assumption that consumption regulates production. Accordingly, consumers were construed as being powerful enough to manipulate the market and consequentially politics.[12] Women played a crucial role in implementing the boycott since the consumption of food was attributed to female duties. Furthermore, the abstention from West Indian sugar offered a political arena for people who were not able to act as a political protagonist by law, including women, religious Dissenters and even children.[13]

While the campaign failed to actually abolish the slave trade, it still proved to be an immense success in terms of creating popular sentiments and controlling a discourse to a certain extent.[14] This aspect is essential to my thesis since it demonstrates that the boycott movement and its propaganda offer the possibility to analyse several discourses surrounding the issue of slavery and Abolitionism.

4.2 Campaigners

The campaign to abstain from West Indian produce is characterised as one of the first forms of consumer action in historical and literature studies, centring on the power and the meaning of the consumer as well as on the propaganda for the boycott. Despite the success of the campaign in terms of mobilising the public and the research on it, little attention has been given to the campaigners so far. For instance, the identity of William Fox, author of the influential pamphlet *An Address*, has been confused by librarians and bibliographers, resulting in attributing the pamphlet incorrectly (see 4.2.1).

[10] Sussman (2000) p. 3
[11] Carey (2005) p. 2
[12] Sussman (2000) p. 23
[13] Oldfield (1995) p. 147-148, Sussman (2000) p. 3
[14] Drescher (1986) p. 166

I will portray the campaigners of the pamphlets I analysed, not only to shed light onto the activists behind the movement, but to analyse their background, notably their networks. As I have pointed out in the last section, the campaigners of the sugar boycott claimed that the people, subsumed as the consumer, were powerful agents of the market. This consumer represented the individuality of each citizen and the collectivity of the people at once, suggesting an analogy between the two terms. This strategy implies two ideas: First, literally everyone, regardless of his or her social status or any other background, could abstain from sugar and act upon politics. Second, the people abstaining from sugar had one thing in common: their rejection of slavery based on moral grounds. Moral in turn was considered to be a characteristic of the true human being; thus, ideally, a characteristic of the majority. These simple thoughts reveal the paradoxical assumption of the campaigners that the consumer represented each individual in his or her singularity as well as the collective will of the people. I emphasised this thought because it raises the question whether the campaigners appeared as a homogeneous group or as individuals, completely disconnected besides their engagement against slavery. To be more precise, I will use the research on the activists to explore the question of a concerted hidden agenda behind the campaign, besides abolishing the slave trade.

Since most of the pamphlets promoting the sugar boycott were published anonymously, there is little chance to reconstruct the circle of abolitionists behind it in detail, at least in the context of this diploma thesis. Owing to the popularity and relevance of the pamphlet, I will start my research with the *Address's* author William Fox and subsequently explore his relationship to other anti-slavery activists and their networks.

4.2.1 William Fox

William Fox was a bookseller and radical pamphleteer of the 1790s. He operated a bookshop in Holborn Hill, London, appearing as a seller between 1773 and 1794.[15] The works he sold cover a broad spectrum of subjects, ranging from literary texts to handbooks. However, Timothy Whelan argues that Fox seemed to have been concerned with the slave trade before publishing the Address since he appears as a seller of Thomas Southerne's version of Aphra Behn's novel *Oroonoko*, a play highly popular with abolitionists due to its depiction of the noble slave and the ruthless slave owner.[16]

In 1782 Fox started to collaborate with Martha Gurney, a Baptist printer and bookseller, whom he probably met through her brother Joseph Gurney, since both men were subscribers to the *Humane Society*[17] and operated

[15] Whelan (2009) p. 399

[16] Whelan (2009) p. 399

[17] *The Royal Humane Society* was founded as the *Society for the Recovery of Persons Apparently Drowned* in 1774 by William Hawes who was a friend of Joseph Gurney. The

bookshops within walking distance in Holborn.[18] Admittedly, they may also have been acquainted with each other through their church affiliation given that Fox was probably a Baptist like the Gurneys. For though Fox presented himself as a Dissenter in his pamphlets, there are no official records of his religious denomination. Nevertheless, he was most likely a Baptist by reason that the language of his pamphlets does not indicate that he was a Quaker or a Unitarian.[19] Besides collaborating commercially, William Fox and Martha Gurney supposedly also entered into a domestic partnership of convenience as they shared the same address between 1782 and 1794. Arrangements like this were quite common for single women and men in the eighteenth century since it was considered to be beneficial to both parties.[20] Whelan points out that Gurney's printing experience and opposition to the slave trade laid the foundation for Fox to evolve from a minor bookseller into one of the most important pamphleteers of the 1790s.[21] Despite his relevance, William Fox has been misidentified and his identity has been attributed to three other individuals of that name repeatedly. As Whelan convincingly argues, these three individuals are unlikely to be the authors of the *Address* and other pamphlets due to their political views, social affiliation and a stay abroad.[22] This confusion originates from the fact that William Fox published the *Address* anonymously; he was only identified in a pro-slavery pamphlet.[23]

William Fox started his career as pamphleteer with the *Address* in 1791 which proved to be an immense success. While this pamphlet will be discussed in section 4.3.1, I will illustrate Fox's pamphlets in general in this paragraph. Fox wrote sixteen pamphlets on political topics between 1791 and 1794, collaborating with Martha Gurney in publishing them.[24] While he started by attacking the slave trade and slavery in the *Address* and the follow-up pamphlet *A Summary View of the Evidence Delivered before a Committee of the House of Commons, Relating to the Slave Trade* (1792), he focused on the events in France and their implications for Britain later on.[25] Nevertheless, he published an abolitionist pamphlet in 1794, the same year that he joined the *Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery*[26], an organisation that also Joseph Gurney and his eldest son became

society was aimed at imparting knowledge of rendering first aid.

[18] Whelan (2009) p. 399

[19] Whelan (2009) p. 400

[20] Whelan (2009) p. 400-401

[21] Whelan (2009) p. 401

[22] Whelan (2009) p. 404-407

[23] The relevant quotation can be found in a footnote in a pro-slavery pamphlet *A Vindication of the Use of Sugar* (1792), in which the anonymous writer refers to the Address: 'the Author of the pamphlet in question is well known to be a Mr. F**, formerly an eminent Bookseller in Holborn'.

[24] Whelan (2009) p. 397

[25] See the list of Fox's work on Whelan (2008): `http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/williamfox.htm` (accessed October 2012)

[26] The society was founded as *The Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery, the*

members of one year later.[27] The pamphlets concerning the impact of the French Revolution deal with the war against France, revolutionary principles and yet the slave trade, overall Fox attacked the Pitt administration from all sides in 1793 and 1794.[28] Regarding democratic efforts and their abatement, Fox wrote: 'Revolution principles, whether French, English, or Polish, are certainly dangerous to them, in proportion as they are beneficial to their subjects'.[29]

4.2.2 Martha Gurney

Martha Gurney (1733-1816) was a Baptist bookseller and printer who became a major figure of the abstention movement as most of the abolitionist pamphlets she printed and sold promoted the sugar boycott. Still, like her friend William Fox, she has been unrecognised by most historians, remaining an obscure figure behind the androgynous 'M. Gurney' on her title pages.[30] As pointed out above, the two of them formed a fruitful cooperation in political pamphleteering. However, Gurney had published an anti-slavery pamphlet before starting her collaboration with Fox in publishing the Address. In 1788 she released her first political pamphlet, *A Sermon on the African Slave Trade*, written by her family's pastor, James Dore[31], and printed in association with James Phillips and the *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade*.[32] The political influence of James Phillips and the *Society* will be discussed in the next chapter; however, I will anticipate that their approval, expressed in their collaboration, demonstrates Gurney's high position within the abolitionist movement.[33]

Gurney's family background is an important aspect of her network and explains her specific prominence within the anti-slavery community. She was the daughter of Thomas Gurney[34] (1705-1770) who was a shorthand writer serving at the *Old Bailey*, like her brother Joseph Gurney (1744-1815) who served as the leading court stenographer in the 1790s.[35] Owing to his position, Joseph Gurney witnessed the interviews on the slave trade in the House of Commons in 1791; one year later he attended the debate

Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and the Improvement of the Condition of the African Race in 1775. It was the first American abolition society; in the second half of the 1780s Benjamin Franklin became the society's president.

[27] Whelan (2009) p. 400

[28] Whelan (2009) p. 403

[29] as cited in Whelan (2009) p. 403

[30] Whelan (2009) p. 403

[31] James Dore served as the Maze Pond Baptist Church's pastor and was a member of the *Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.*

[32] Whelan (2009) p. 401

[33] Whelan (2009) p. 402

[34] Thomas Gurney published a Manual on shorthand writing which formed the basis of the family's excellent reputation as shorthand writers.

[35] Whelan (2009) p. 399

on the slave trade in the House of Lords in his role as shorthand writer. This allowed him to provide his sister and his friend William Fox with parliamentary proceedings who benefited from using and publishing the information expeditiously. The family historian W. H. Gurney Salter argued that the Gurneys have been given this advantage officially on account of their reputation regarding accurate reproductions of court proceedings. Besides providing the anti-slavery movement with data, Joseph Gurney's abolitionist beliefs are evident from his membership to the *Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery* and the *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade*. He had subscribed to the latter in 1787, the year of its foundation.[36] Thanks to her network and her printing experience, Martha Gurney became a notable campaigner of the abolition movement.

Like her brother, Martha Gurney appears to be a convinced abolitionist activist. Along with James Phillips and James Ridgway she was among the few printers and sellers who never published any pro-slavery pamphlets.[37] Moreover, she steadily reduced the *Address's* price as the demand for the pamphlet grew[38] and exhibited the print of a slave ship in her shop, a picture that turned into an iconic image of the abolition movement due to its simple yet striking depiction of the suffering evoked by the slave trade.[39]

4.2.3 James Phillips and the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade

The printer James Phillips (1745-1799) appears as a seller on the first four editions of the *Address* along with Martha Gurney.[40] He was a Quaker and founding member of the *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade*.[41] His printing experience was vitally important to the society since it provided the organisation with a distribution channel. Phillips's relevance is further emphasised by the fact that the members of the society congregated in his printing shop in George Yard, London, to hold meetings.[42] In addition, he had developed an extensive network of contacts which proved to be important in mobilising supporters. After all, when the society had listed 132 names of potential campaigners to get in touch with, Phillips had accounted for more than the half of the contacts.[43] I will characterise the society to illustrate Phillips's role within the organisation and the abstention movement.

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[36] Whelan (2009) p. 400
[37] Whelan (2009) p. 403
[38] Whelan (2009) p. 402
[39] Whelan (2009) p. 401
[40] Whelan (2008): http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/williamfox.htm (accessed October 2012)
[41] *Quakers in Britain* (2012): http://www.quaker.org.uk/appendix (accessed October 2012)
[42] Hochschild (2005) p. 14
[43] Oldfield (1992) p. 333

The *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, also known as the *Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, hereinafter referred to as the *London Committee*, was founded in London in 1787. At its inception, it comprised nine Quakers, among them James Phillips, and three non-Quakers: Chairperson Granville Sharp (1735-1813), Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846) and Philip Sansom.[44] The Evangelical William Wilberforce (1759-1833) served as the Committee's Parliamentary spokesperson since Quakers were barred from Parliament[45], however, he did not join the *Committee* officially until 1794.[46] He was a Member of Parliament and became the abolition movement's Parliamentary leader at the suggestion of his friend William Pitt the Younger, the Prime Minister.[47] Wilberforce probably encouraged the *Committee's* foundation since he had already announced his intention to introduce the subject of the slave trade in Parliament at that time.[48]

John R. Oldfield argues that the *London Committee* was far more important than its counterpart in Manchester owing to its metropolitan character and network.[49] The organisation aimed to achieve the abolition of the slave trade by means of gathering evidence and informing the public and Parliament of the horrors of transatlantic slavery.[50] In doing so, Thomas Clarkson became an important figure of the abolition movement due to his trips throughout Britain. He toured the country to investigate the slave trade and gather information on its cruelties to make them public subsequently.[51] Yet, his campaign posed a risk to the movement since it was partially conceived as political agitation, endorsed by his approval of the ideals of the French Revolution.[52] In 1789, he had travelled to Paris to lobby the new government with little success to abolish the slave trade.[53] Clarkson had been introduced to James Phillips by the *Committee's* chairperson-to-be Granville Sharp who had been staying in close contact with British, American and French abolitionists.[54] In the 1760s, Sharp had established anti-slavery campaigning

[44] List of members: http://www.quaker.org.uk/appendix (accessed October 2012)
[45] *Quakers in Britain* (2012): http://www.quaker.org.uk/quakers-initiate-abolition-movement-britain (accessed October 2012)
[46] Carey (2002): http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/wilberforce.htm (accessed October 2012)
[47] Carey (2002): http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/wilberforce.htm (accessed October 2012)
[48] Oldfield (1992) p. 331-332
[49] Oldfield (1992) p. 337
[50] Oldfield (1992) p. 333
[51] Carey (2002): http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/clarkson.htm (accessed October 2012)
[52] Oldfield (1992) p. 333
[53] Carey (2002): http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/clarkson.htm (accessed October 2012)
[54] Carey (2002): http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/clarkson.htm (accessed October 2012)

in Britain, consequentially, he was considered to be one of the movement's moral authorities.[55] Thus, the London Committee's inner circle comprised of powerful men of wide influence.

While the organisation's access to Parliament through Wilberforce proved to loom large, it also decelerated the *Committee's* activities given that its members had to ponder on political strategies and codes of behaviour. By way of example, the *Committee* had to distance itself from any activities that could have been conceived as rebellious.[56] Besides its political influence on policy makers, the *Committee's* real advantage lay in its ability to mobilise public opinion. Its founders arose from the bourgeoisie; they were cautious entrepreneurs and men of business who knew how to exploit opportunities.[57] After all, most of the activists' time was dedicated to the gathering and circulation of evidence while lobbying Parliament represented merely the tip of the iceberg.[58] Besides its success, mobilising public opinion turned out to be problematic since the campaigners were obliged to meet the people's expectations which were by no means homogeneous. Officially, the campaign aimed to abolish the slave trade, nevertheless, some supporters called for the abolishment of slavery while others were content with a regulation of the slave trade.[59]

At the beginning of the 1790s, the London Committee remained mute about the sugar boycott. It did not support the campaign nor did it oppose it.[60] Yet, the organisation seemed to approve of the boycott given that the Committee's printer, James Phillips, appears on the title pages of the first four editions of the Address. However, it did not finance the pamphlet.[61] The Committee's policy required from its members to distance themselves from the ideals of the French Revolution, especially when revolutionary principles were linked to the slave rebellion in Santo Domingo. Hence, the boycott was probably conceived as being too subversive in order to support it; nevertheless, Clarkson encouraged the boycott, followed by Sharp and Phillips.[62] In 1793, the Committee reconsidered to join the sugar boycott for a short period; however, the idea was rejected for unknown reasons. Oldfield considers it most likely that Wilberforce intervened since he had attended meetings of the society just a few weeks before.[63]

The advisement of joining the boycott sheds light on the condition of the *London Committee* which had gone into decline at that point. In

[55] Carey (2002): http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/sharp.htm (accessed October 2012)
[56] Oldfield (1992) p. 340
[57] Oldfield (1992) p. 332
[58] Oldfield (1992) p. 338
[59] Oldfield (1992) p. 337
[60] Oldfield (1992) p. 340
[61] Whelan (2009) p. 402
[62] Oldfield (1992) p. 340
[63] Oldfield (1992) p. 342

1794, Thomas Clarkson retired due to a physical breakdown caused by excessive labour. Losing its front man, the *Committee* ceased operations in 1797; however, it was resurrected in 1804.[64] The *London Committee's* re-establishment probably results from Wilberforce's ambition to introduce the *Abolition Bill* in Parliament once again.[65] After all, Wilberforce petitioned Parliament in 1804 and 1805 without success; two years later the Bill finally passed Parliament.[66] Next to Wilberforce, the *Committee's* inner circle was constituted by Clarkson, Sharp, and Phillips. They were among the few original members that rejoined the organisation.[67] Due to political events, the organisation's character had changed. Whereas the original *Committee* had engaged in popular politics, the re-established society was primarily conceived as being a parliamentary lobby, disclaiming any political agitation of the mob.[68]

4.2.4 Summary

I described a network of activists campaigning the abstention from slave grown sugar; however, it is important to note that these campaigners represent only one aspect of the boycott movement. First, I restricted my analysis to the authors and publishers of pamphlets deploying metaphors of cannibalism (omitting pamphlets not using theses metaphors and other modes of propaganda). Second, I only portrayed a prominent circle of abolitionists that has been researched quite well and whose collaboration can be traced back. There are authors and publishers not mentioned in this text due to the fact that there is little or no information on them. Their names can be found in chapter 4.3 which covers the pamphlets mentioned before.

Recapping the circle of the abolitionists portrayed in this chapter, there is a strong emphasis on organisational structures since most pamphlets are published anonymously. Hence, I focused on printers and the *London Committee*. The pamphleteer William Fox collaborated with the Baptist printer Martha Gurney in publishing the *Address* and other pamphlets. Both were highly involved in mobilising anti-slavery sentiments; furthermore, they were linked to the *London Committee* through Martha Gurney's brother, Joseph Gurney, who had subscribed to the society since its inception as well as through their collaboration with the *Committee's* printer, James Phillips. These relations result in a network of abolitionists pursuing the boycott of West Indian sugar openly or more covertly. The different approaches of

[64] Carey (2002): http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/clarkson.htm (accessed October 2012); Oldfield (1992) p. 342
[65] Oldfield (1992) p. 342
[66] Carey (2002): http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/wilberforce.htm (accessed October 2012)
[67] Oldfield (1992) p. 342
[68] Oldfield (1992) p. 342

the activists reflect on the possibilities they were given by the political and societal framework.

Still, the question of a hidden agenda remains. What united the activists of the anti-sugar campaign besides anti-slavery? I have pointed out that the campaign was carried out by religious Dissenters for the most part. However, it is important to note that the Quaker based *London Committee* did not appear as an immediate activist of the abstention movement; nevertheless, I treated it as a protagonist due to the *Committee's* involvement considering James Phillips's role as the society's printer and as a seller of the *Address*. Taking into account the Dissenters' status within British society, the majority of the campaigners was characterised as having limited political power. Yet, the activists did not represent a homogeneous political group. For instance, the *London Committee's* parliamentary spokesperson, William Wilberforce, was a close friend of the Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger, while William Fox, author of the *Address*, opposed the Pitt administration. I will revisit the question of a hidden agenda after illustrating the pamphlets making propaganda for the boycott of sugar and the campaign itself.

4.3 Pamphlets

I will introduce pamphlets propagating the abstention from West Indian sugar in this chapter. According to my exploratory focus, I limited my research to texts using metaphors of cannibalism and blood. I have analysed seven pamphlets suggesting the trope of cannibalism more unobtrusively or enunciating it accusingly. Some activists evoked images of cannibalism by subtly comparing the bodies of slaves with the food they were producing, suggesting that the slaves' bodily fluids such as sweat would fertilise the soil or insinuating that the sugar contained the slaves' blood. The latter referred to the actual contamination with blood as well as to the moral damnability of the slave trade expressed in the utilisation of a sanguinary rhetoric. However, the explicit accusation of cannibalism proved to be the more shocking strategy as it did not simply suggest the consumption of human substances but announced it openly instancing William Fox (see 4.3.1) and Andrew Burn (see 4.3.6). The graphic depiction of cannibalism was not restricted to the consumption of sugar; abolitionists argued that cannibalism constituted a common punishment for rebellious slaves on the slave ships.

The description of the sources is divided into the pamphlets' background and the main arguments of the texts; the pamphlets themselves appear in order of their publication date. I have aimed at specifying the pamphlets' reasoning and distinctive features. I did not highlight common arguments of the anti-slavery movement in detail since these figures of argument are used in almost all pamphlets. I will refer to them in section 4.4 to discuss

discourses of the 1790s.

4.3.1 An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Utility of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum (1791)

Background

William Fox's first pamphlet, *An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Utility of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum*,[69] proved to be an immense success. About 250.000[70] copies were distributed; consequently, the *Address* became the most successful pamphlet of the eighteenth century circulating all over Britain and America.[71] It ran through at least twenty-five editions and was published under various titles within one year.[72]

The first two editions are entitled *An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Consumption of West-India Produce* which was changed into *An Address to the People of Great Britain, Proving the Necessity of Refraining from Sugar and Rum, in Order to Abolish the African Slave-Trade* for the third edition. The title of the fourth and fifth edition is *An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Utility of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum.* Thereafter, the following editions were renamed as *An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Propriety of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum.* The pamphlet is most commonly referred to by its last title. The varying titles do not correlate with the changing sellers. Martha Gurney is the only printer who appears as a seller on all editions of the *Address*; from the 14th edition on she is also the only one. James Phillips appears on the title pages of the first four editions, William Darton on the fifth edition and Thomas Knott and Charles Forster on the sixth to thirteenth editions.[73]

Besides being printed in large numbers in such a short period, demand still increased. Several pirated versions were printed without Fox's or Gurney's approval to accommodate demand; still, Gurney, who sold all non-pirated versions of the *Address*, steadily reduced the price of the pamphlet to stimulate its distribution.[74] Fox's polemic paper provoked a pamphlet war resulting in the publication of approximately twenty texts, both vindicating and attacking

[69] I will cite the fourth edition, sold by James Phillips (see 4.2.3) and Martha Gurney (see 4.2.2), London.

[70] Whelan (2009) p. 402

[71] Whelan (2009) p. 397

[72] Whelan refers to twenty-six editions while other sources mention only twenty-five editions.

[73] Whelan (2008): http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/williamfox.htm (accessed October 2012)

[74] Whelan (2009) p. 402

the *Address*.[75] As has been pointed out in the chapter on the *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, the *London Committee* did not finance the *Address* nor did it officially approve of the sugar boycott; still, I consider it as an important protagonist due to James Phillips's role as the society's printer and as a seller of the pamphlet.

Argument

Fox calls the consumers of West Indian produce to action by depicting them as the prime mover of the slave trade:

> "if we purchase the commodity we participate in the crime. The slave-dealer, the slave-holder, and the slave-driver, are virtually the agents of the consumer, and may be considered as employed and hired by him to procure the commodity." (p. 3)

Besides being depicted as being responsible for the slave trade, the people are invoked to act by reason of their moral authority given that the legislature is described as being corrupted by the wealth derived from the slave trade:

> "The wealth derived from the horrid traffic, has created an influence that secures its continuance; unless the people at large shall sap its foundation, by refusing to receive the produce of robbery and murder." (p. 2)

Since the individual consumer is pictured as the source of the slave trade, it is his or her consumption choice that manipulates the market. To further enhance the image of the powerful consumer, Fox computes the impact of the Europeans' sugar consumption:

> "A family that uses 5lb. of sugar *per week*, with the proportion of rum, will by abstaining from the consumption 21 months, prevent the slavery or murder of a fellow-creature" (p. 4)

Fox presents his calculations as facts simulating validity and exact calculability of the Atlantic slave trade's horrid mechanisms. This is particularly obvious in the citation quoted at the beginning of this thesis in which the consumption of West Indian sugar is being equated with the consumption of human flesh, expressed in a simple formula. It is the most radical example of accusing consumers of being murderers and cannibals. This way, the behaviour of consumers is directly linked to the lives of slaves; in other words, the consumers are given no choice to deny their responsibility. Their guilt is further increased by being born into the right place at the right time:

> "It may be hoped that claiming for ourselves the most perfect freedom, we shall no longer impose upon others a slavery the most oppressive; and that, enjoying a degree of felicity unequalled in any age or country, we shall cease to range the world to increase the misery of mankind." (p. 2)

[75] Whelan (2009) p. 403

Fox contrasts the consumers' fortune with the lawlessness in the West Indies. Referring to the plantation owners, he argues that "They have it seems been taught, that we have no right to controul them." (p. 8) This differentiation between the imperial centre and the West Indian colonies, a space without rights, is illustrated by the fact that slaves by no means enjoy any of the rights attributed to British men:

> "In demanding then liberty, for the persons called slaves in our islands: we demand no more than they are entitled to by the common law." (p. 8)

Once again, Fox stresses the inconsistency of British actions. Recalling the rights of men, he does not accept unequal treatment due to ethnic background as justification:

> "And can our pride suggest to us, that the rights of men are limited to any nation, or to any colour?" (p. 11)

Yet, Fox does not limit the subject of deprived liberty and dignity to the enslaved. He argues that the slave trade undermines Britain's national dignity as well. While the African slaves are torn apart from their families and left to the slave owner's cruelties, the British motherland is being subverted by the slave trade's implications. Besides moral guilt which affects all Britons – the consumer in particular regarding Fox's argumentation – those who are directly involved in the trade are especially endangered of becoming corrupted and being affected by contagion. Seamen embody the link between the imperial centre and the colonial periphery; as opposed to the cruel and voracious West Indian slave holder they represent the vulnerable Britons who despair of the endangerments and cruelties they are forced to witness. Ultimately, Fox stresses religious figures threatening the consumer with the thought of divine justice:

> "For the consequence of our conduct may not be limited by its immediate effect. Our example, our admonitions, our influence may produce remote ones, of which we can form no estimate? and which after having done our duty, must be submitted to Him who governs all things after the counsel of his own will." (p. 12)

4.3.2 A Vindication of the Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Use of West India Produce. With Some Observations and Facts Relative to the Situation of Slaves. In Reply to a Female Apologist for Savery. (1791)

Background

The author Richard Hillier, according to the title page[76] a former sailor in the West India trade, defends Fox's *Address* in front of a female apologist for slavery. Having been sold for two pence, the pamphlet was quite expensive compared to the other polemic papers analysed in this thesis which were usually sold for one penny per copy. Also, the title page does not indicate a graduated price when purchasing the pamphlet in large numbers as customary.

Argument

As the title and the subtitle suggest, Richard Hillier argues on the basis of the fact that he is an eyewitness. In addition, he stresses the point that his objector is a woman, a fact that seems condemnable in particular since women were supposed to represent sensibility and compassion. Besides not embodying feminine values, Hillier's opponent also violates the essence of the Christian faith:

> "It was kind in you to tell the world of your humanity and your Christianity; as, without some such friendly hint, no exertion of human sagacity could have discovered that you possessed any thing like the humanity of the eighteenth century, or the Christianity of the New Testament." (p. 4)

The author invokes the ideal of humanity to attack the vindicators of slavery. In doing so, Hillier, just like Fox, refers to the aspect of a new era. The humanitarian example of the eighteenth century is opposed by the supporters of slavery who are stuck in the past. This differentiation in time is further enhanced by a spatial and racial boundary:

> "For offences not cognizable by individuals, the code of laws for the punishment of slaves proves more effectually than a thousand arguments, that the West Indians are a sanguinary, brutal, vindictive race." (p. 22)

Hillier does not restrict the subject of racial difference and racism to the West Indies. Referring to the criticism of advocates of slavery whereby abolitionists should start their charity at home, the author criticises the comparison of slaves and the British lower class drawn by pro-slavery activists:

[76] The pamphlet was sold by Martha Gurney (see 4.2.2) and T. Knott, Lombard-Street, London.

> "British Miners in particular, will not thank you for calling them under-ground slaves, nor for drawing a comparison between them and Africans." (p. 8)

Even if the author seems to accuse the lower classes of being racist, he himself deploys the topic of racial difference and classification for his purposes. Hillier invokes a form of racism which seemingly contradicts the romantic yet simple portrayal of Africans and Africa in the same text. The systematic oppression of the once happy Africans leads to the West Indies which are depicted as a place without justice and of colonial tyranny. The lack of legal security corresponds with the wrongful slave trade and its judicial implication when Hillier asks his readers:

> "Is it less a crime to rob a man of liberty than of property?" (p. 20)

The slave system perverts the principle of legal certainty, a principle the British lower classes can rely on according to the author. At least, they would get paid for their work and not be threatened with torture. As a result of this imbalance, Britons should end the slave trade not only on moral grounds but also to act in their own self-interest regarding the threat of slave rebellions:

> "Nor should it excite our surprise, when we behold that latent spark of liberty which had been stifled, but not extinguished, burst into a devouring flame, and prompt an injured race to break their chains promiscuously upon the heads of the innocent and the guilty." (p. 22-23)

4.3.3 Considerations on the Slave Trade; and the Consumption of West Indian Produce. (1791)

Background

The text is extracted from Thomas Cooper's *Letters on the Slave Trade*, published in 1787, and William Fox's Address. The pamphlet was printed by a society in Hackney[77] which Brycchan Carey considers likely to be a branch of the *London Committee*, the *Hackney Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade*.[78]

William Darton (1755-1819) and Joseph Harvey (1764-1841) were both Quakers and started their partnership in 1791. They published Quaker works and books for children written by Quakers and others.[79]

[77] Printed and sold by Darton and Harvey, Gracechurch-Street; J. Carter, back of the Royal Exchange; and J. Parsons, Paternoster Row, London.

[78] Private correspondence with Brycchan Carey in December 2012.

[79] *University of Reading* (2012): http://www.reading.ac.uk/special-collections/collections/sc-darton.aspx (accessed October 2012)

Argument

The author of the pamphlet claims that anti-slavery campaigners would openly announce their names while pro-slavery activists would lobby anonymously and concludes that the former could rely on the people's acceptance while the latter would have to hide. Interestingly enough, the pamphlet was published anonymously; hence, I assume that contemporaries knew who had financed the pamphlet.

The author describes the situation of the slaves tracing their fate from the slave ships to the plantations. He depicts the African slaves as being stolen and treated like animals and as the slave owner's property, contrasting the laws against property and liberty:

> "Those who are picked out for sale are immediately branded on the breast (with a red hot iron which lies ready in the fire for that purpose) with the arms and names of the company, or owners, who are the purchasers." (p. 7)

The system of slavery – including the market – is described as immoral and corrupting the people involved in it. For instance, Africans on the slave ships are forced to eat their fellow captives for refusing to eat; this barbarity is witnessed and executed by seamen:

> "That he obliged all the negroes to come upon deck, where they persisted in their resolution of not taking food; he caused his sailors to lay hold upon one of the most obstinate, and chopt the poor creature into small pieces, forcing some of the others to eat a part of the manggled body, withal swearing to the survivors, that he would use them all, one after another, in the same manner, if they did not consent to eat." (p. 8-9)

The text suggests the possibility of a slave rebellion as a logical consequence of British policy. While British law sets the frame conditions, it is the European consumers who are blamed for being the prime mover of the slave trade. As such, they are accused of being murderers:

> "If the facts above stated are true, and the conclusions just, every person who habitually consumes one article of West Indian produce, raised by slaves, is guilty of the crime of murder" (p. 14)

Consequently, those who do not raise their voice and abstain from sugar respectively are partaking in the crime of slavery:

> "Silence in this case, is a concession of guilt" (p. 6)

4.3.4 No Rum! - No Sugar! Or, The Voice of Blood, Being Half an Hour's Conversation, Between a Negro and an English Gentleman, Shewing the Horrible Nature of the Slave Trade, and Pointing Out an Easy and Effectual Method of Determining It, by an Act of the People. (1792)

Argument

The pamphlet[80] simulates a conversation between an English man representing his fellow Britons, pseudonymous *Mr. English* (E.), and a (former?) slave, called *Cushoo* (C.). The African tries to unravel the Briton's prejudices by presenting him the slaves' perspective. The text offers a depiction of victim and perpetrator incarnating good and evil. Africans are portrayed as being innocent and pure, corrupted only by European goods such as alcohol and weapons. The Europeans in turn are described as being hypocritical and vicious. It is their unprincipled behaviour that leads to the destruction of the African continent and its inhabitants. The pamphlet refers to the inconsistency of European arrogance:

> "E. I thought you blacks had no such fine feelings.
> C. Me beg you pardon, Massa, dat be de whites – de blacks all feel."
> (p. 12)

The whole argument of the pamphlet aims at confronting the consumer or rather his or her alter ego *Mr. English* with the state of the slave trade and the fact that the consumer is the prime mover of the events surrounding the trade. The African explains the chain of events originating from the European consumers' demand for rum and sugar to the rather astonished *Mr. English*. To depict the slaves' fate the author refers to quite common images of anti-slavery campaigners: the separation of African families caused by slavery, the conditions on the slave ships involving cannibalism and the conditions of work at the plantation including torture. The subject of cannibalism is used to emphasise the barbarity of people involved in trading slaves. *Cushoo* states that the captives on the slave ships are sometimes forced to eat their killed fellow Africans as a form of punishment for being rebellious or refusing to eat. The text contests common ideas of Africans by changing the reader's perspective and putting the Europeans in the place of the savage not only in this context but also when referring to the idea of liberty:

> "E. O no; we live in a land of liberty; Englishmen love liberty, and have often spilt their blood to maintain it.
> C. Love liberty! ah, dat be reckoned very good ting in England – But dey roast and burn us for dat in West Indies.

[80] Printed for L. Wayland, Middle-Row, Holborn. Sold also by Mr. Parsons, Paternoster-Row, and Mr. Button, Newirgton-Causey, London.

> E. Rebellion you mean, I suppose, and revolt.
> C. Aye! it be de same ting – Blacké man want be free like white man.
> E. But you are blacks you know.
> C. And you be white, Massa – Ha! ha! what odds dat make? We all broder." (p. 14-15)

Hence, the Europeans are described as hypocrites who condemn their own ideal; even worse, they pervert it into a criminal act and torture and kill those who fight for these ideals. In the text, this hypocrisy and inconsistency is recognised by the African:

> "E. But we are Christian.
> C. Christians! ah curse, swear, lye, whore, get drunk – suppose dat be Christian.
> E. How! what d'ye mean?
> C. Dat be de religion dey teach us."

4.3.5 An Address to Her Royal Highness the Dutchess of York Against the Use of Sugar (1792)

Background

The pamphlet is addressed to Frederica Charlotte, the daughter in law of George III., King of the United Kingdom from 1760 to 1820 It was published anonymously; yet, it is written in the name of the campaigners to abstain from West Indian sugar. There is no reliable evidence concerning the question whether the Royal Family joined the abstention movement or not. However, the political satirist James Gillray (1757-1815) refers to the subject in a cartoon entitled *Anti-saccharites, -or- John Bull and his family leaving off the use of sugar* (1792) which suggests that the King and his family did abstain from West Indian sugar or rather that they were said to have done so.[81]

Argument

The author of the pamphlet pleads with Frederica Charlotte to abstain from West Indian produce since she is conceived as being a central figure to lobbying the Royal Family. She is depicted as a philanthropic and noble princess who would be able to convince her husband and his family to join the boycott thanks to her virtue. Yet, the pamphleteer does not merely wish to influence the Royal Family; rather he or she hopes to reach the upper classes:

> "The influence of your example will then spread itself through the different ranks of the nobility and gentry. Fashion will take the side of humanity." (p. 17)

[81] Oldfield (1995) p. 57

Also, the influence of the beneficent Duchess is supposed to reach beyond British frontiers:

> "It may be reasonably expected, that an example set by a Princess so illustrious will extend its influence beyond the limits of the British empire, pervade other countries, and be followed by princes, nobles, and people. Then will neither Britain, nor any other country, any more send their infernal vessels to the African coast." (p. 17)

The author refers to the evidence delivered to the House of Commons[82] as well as to William Fox's *Address*. Furthermore, he or she relates to the abstention movement's progression pointing out its success:

> "Six months, I believe I may say five, have not yet expired, since the public have been called upon to lay aside the use of sugar; and yet, in the kingdom at large, the number of those who have complied with the proposal is reckoned considerably to exceed one hundred thousand." (p. 14)

The pamphleteer uses several stereotypical arguments of the anti-slavery movement such as female sensibility, the separation of African families caused by slavery, the guilt of the consumer, Christian morals, the contagion of sugar with blood, and the immorality of the slave trade. Taking into account the arguments of pro-slavery activists regarding Britain's economy, the author argues that British traders would explore new opportunities:

> "Should your Royal Highness be told that this measure will prove injurious to commerce, you will call to your recollection the enterprize which distinguishes the people of this country. An English trader will always find out some track in which he will make his stock, his skill, and his industry, turn to account." (p. 21)

The damnability of the consumption of West Indian produce is further increased by the fact that sugar and rum do not constitute essential foods:

> "Be persuaded then to discontinue the use of a drug, which is the produce of cruelty and barbarity!" (p. 16)

4.3.6 A Second Address to the People of Great Britain: Containing a New, and Most Powerful Argument to Abstain from the Use of West India Sugar. By an Eye Witness to the Facts Related. (1792)

Argument

The title of the pamphlet[83] refers to Fox's *Address* depicting it as the follow-up pamphlet. The author Andrew Burn claims to be an eye witness due

[82] *An abstract of the Evidence Delivered before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in the Years 1790, and 1791 ; on the Part of the Petitioners for the Abolition of the Slave-Trade* (1791), printed for James Phillips (see 4.2.3).

[83] The pamphlet was printed for Martha Gurney (see 4.2.2), London.

to the fact that he had been a resident on a sugar plantation in the West Indies obscuring his exact occupation. In contrast to other pamphleteers Burn hardly accentuates moral arguments; he rather invokes disgust and paranoia to make the people abstain from West Indian sugar. Hence, the concern about their own bodies becomes the main reason for consumers to join the boycott movement:

> "... and hope that from motives of cleanliness, as well as humanity, they will see the necessity of abstaining from West India Sugar." (p. 11)

These motives of cleanliness originate from Burn's description of the sugar production. He strikingly states that

> "It is evident beyond a doubt, that the Consumers of Sugar and Rum, innocent or guilty, are actually the first and moving cause of all those torrents of Blood and Sweat, that annually flow from the body of the poor African." (p. 6-7)

Just like William Fox, Andrew Burn stresses the subject of cannibalism by literalising it. The reference to blood and sweat directly leads to the statement that these bodily fluids and the slaves' flesh are consumed by the European users:

> "Abstain from Sugar, and Slavery falls. The consequence is as clear as the noon-day Sun; yet how difficult to persuade some, that when they eat Sugar, they figuratively eat the Blood of the Negro." (p. 7)

William Fox emphasises the consumption of human blood and flesh; hence, he centres the slaves' suffering since the sugar's pollution with these fluids is caused by torture and murder. In contrast, Andrew Burn primarily discusses the issue of sweat contaminating sugar and rum. Sweat is associated with physical stress, so while it may be synonymous with wrongful conditions of work, it is not necessarily linked to violence against slaves. Since hard work was common in Britain, sweat did not evoke for the reader's sympathy; rather, it did cause disgust:

> "... they literally, and most certainly in so doing, eat large quantities of that last mentioned Fluid [sweat], as it flows copiously from the Body of the laborious Slave, toiling under the scorching rays of a vertical sun, mixed with many other savory ingredients, which shall be hereafter mentioned." (p. 7)

Subsequently, Burn alarms his readers with a simple thought:

> "... but the warm stream from whence it proceeds, is evidently all absorbed among the Sugar; for nothing is more common than to observe little hard lumps among it, of a darker hue than the rest; now whether this is wholly owing to the disgusting moisture I have mentioned, or partly to be attributed to the remains of Molasses among the sugar, I will not take upon me positively to determine; though I should rather imagine it was a mixture of both" (p. 8)

This impression of paranoia and disgust is further enhanced by what Burn ironically refers to as savory ingredients. Besides illustrating the sugar molasses as being contaminated with human bodily fluids, Burn adverts to tropical diseases. These diseases are linked to the tropical environment of the West Indies as well as to the African slaves. The conditions of work contribute to the contagion with tropical diseases since the process of producing sugar would necessitate the slaves to stamp the sugar molasses in a hogshead. Burn draws special attention to the feet of slaves because they were supposed to be the place of germ carriers:

> "If delicacy would permit, I could mention many other serophulous disorders, to which the Negro race are much more subject than we are in Europe, with the addition of that well-known, but offensive substance, usually lodged between the human toes, and under the nails; but from what has been just advanced, I make no doubt, but many of my Readers have already begun to call my ugly names; make wry faces; and nauseate the very idea of sugar." (p. 9)

Ultimately, Burn excessively stresses the subject of cannibalism when spreading the rumour of dead bodies in barrels of rum. He introduces the subject by quoting an individual case that is supposed to have happened to a wine merchant who had imported rum from Jamaica. The anecdote claims that the merchant sold rum out of a barrel which proved to be of delicious taste; thus, he opened the barrel in question and found the dead body of a slave. While referring to an accident and ostensibly denying any intention of the plantation owners to refine rum this way, Burn still does suggest a systematic practice:

> "Now far be it from me to insinuate from hence, that any such methods are used to meliorate West India Rum; I will only take upon me to affirm, as a certain fact, that the Carcase of a Dog, Cat, Sheep, Goat, Man or Woman, thoroughly burnt, and put in the bottom of a large vessel, full of Spirits of any kind, will greatly tend to meliorate and soften them. But whether there exist such indelicate wretches, who from avaricious motives are capable of doing this, I leave to my Readers to determine, and to ruminate on what they have read." (p. 12)

Subsequently, Burn seems to verify his own hypothesis of a systematic practice by referring to an analogical claiming that the skeleton of a child was found in a barrel of rum (p. 12).

4.3.7 Considerations: Addressed to Professors of Christianity, of Every Denomination, on the Impropriety of Consuming West-India Sugar & Rum, as Produced by the Oppressive Labour of Slaves. (1792)

Background

The printer of the pamphlet, Charles Wheeler, founded the conservative Newspaper Manchester Chronicle[84] and printed Thomas Cooper's *Letters on the Slave Trade* in 1787.

Argument

In accordance with the title, the author of the pamphlet[85] refers to Christian values arguing that the people need to act upon the subject of slavery "particularly since the legislature of this country has declined to comply with the wishes of people of almost every religious denomination[.] (p. 2)" This passage suggests a consensus of the people and denies any disunity between Christian groups. This union of Christian believers is opposed to the legislature which is described as being unwilling to act on behalf of the people. In tolerating the slave trade and its implications in spite of the evidence arguing against it, the legislative authority is violating the rights of men:

> "It is now generally admitted, that the slave-trade is a violation of all the rights of men, attended with consequences barbarous and beyond description." (p. 3)

The author employs common figures of argument such as sugar being polluted with blood and accusing consumers of supporting the oppressors:

> "For if we purchase and use that which is produced by oppression, we contribute to the gain of the oppressor" (p. 4)

This way, the consumer's behaviour is directly linked to the accumulation of the oppressor, equating consumer and slave owner as perpetrator. The injustice of the slave trade is further accentuated by the fact that slaves are depicted as stolen people, suggesting they are treated as property.

[84] *Spartacus Educational* (2012): http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/PRchronicle.htm (accessed October 2012)

[85] I will cite the third edition

4.4 The Abstention Movement and Discourses of the 1790s

The campaigners of the Abolition movement invoked the horrors of the slave trade and slavery itself; however, they did not restrict their arguments to the immediate subject of slavery. Rather, they referred to several discourses of the 1790s in order to appeal to the people. This way, the anti-slavery activists assured that the people of Great Britain could empathise with the slaves. Seymour Drescher argues that slavery constituted an extreme form of bondage and injustice which eventually served the abolitionists to debate these issues in British society itself.[86]

Based on this assumption, I had arranged six higher-ranking categories each containing a number of interrelated discourses occurring in the pamphlets I analysed. I will illustrate these discourses and explain their significance within the abolitionists' arguments. All these discourses are interrelated to each other; however, I tried to categorise them to highlight certain aspects.

4.4.1 The Rights of Men

This section deals with a number of discourses that I subsumed as the rights of men. It involves the emergence of democratic sentiments in connection to the responsibility of the individual. The whole campaign of abstaining from slave grown sugar was based on the assumption that British consumers could manipulate their home market and the requirements involved in it. In other words: the individual consumer was granted the status of a political protagonist.

Drescher demonstrates that Abolitionism empowered the less powerful referring to the petition campaigns.[87] Sussman embraces this premise and points out that the campaigners of the boycott movement favoured those, who were excluded from conventional processes of lobbying politics.[88] The activists of the boycott movement encouraged this empowerment to subsequently argue that consumers would have to bear the responsibility of being policy makers. Illustrating the relation between consumption and production served the campaigners to blame the consumer for causing the slave trade and for this reason the horrors of slavery. They directly addressed the consumers to define the dimension of their guilt as the discussion of the pamphlets in the last chapter demonstrated. The responsibility to facilitate the Abolition of the slave trade resulted from this guilt and was further enhanced by the legislative's unwillingness to act upon the subject. Consequentially, William Fox argued that the people were obliged to take action.[89]

[86] Drescher (1986) p. 166
[87] Drescher (1986) p. 164
[88] Sussman (2000) p. 23
[89] Fox (1791): *An Address*, p. 3 (see 4.3.1)

The abolitionist rhetoric stressed the fact that slaves were sensitive humans, capable of experiencing distress to the same extent as Europeans. This assumption was crucial to declare Africans and Europeans as equal. Thus, equality was expressed in the slaves' suffering.[90] The assumption of equality was essential to recognise injustice. After all, slavery had been justified by defining the Africans as subhuman beings. In contrast, abolitionists argued on grounds of equality accompanied by the issue of human dignity. The comparison of slaves with property or animals was supposed to outrage the British public, especially since slaves were British property.[91] Based on this fact, the activists compared crimes against property with crimes against the liberty of men, suggesting that the former was a violation of law while the latter was carried by law. Thus, abolitionists accused the legislative of legalising murder. This way, the abolitionists opposed the people to the legislative, a move that was quite chancy regarding the events in revolutionary France and the anxiety surrounding similar developments in Britain. As I have pointed out in 4.2.3, the link to subversive agitation posed the risk of being denounced as radical.

Thomas Paine published the pamphlet *The Rights of Man* which defended the French Revolution, in two parts in 1791 and 1792 at the peak of the abstention movement. Paine attacked the monarchy and advocated democratic efforts. The furore aroused by the pamphlet illustrates the impact of revolutionary notions on Britain. However, the issue of slavery allowed the abolitionists to attack the government based on moral grounds. After all, the moral injustice of slavery was inscribed into the legal conception of justice which denied the slaves any access to legal protection.[92] Accordingly, anti-slavery activists invoked the British ideal of liberty, highlighting its contradictoriness with slavery.[93]

Hence, slavery threatened Britain's social order at home by questioning the credibility of its ideals. This aspect was essential to the national identity; however, Christopher Leslie Brown suggests that slavery posed a risk not only in terms of an ideological order, but in terms of national security. After all, Britons feared the slaves' revenge in form of an outburst of physical violence. Accordingly, Brown argues that the British ideal of liberty did not simply concern the slaves' liberty but rather the Britons' liberty. In this context, liberty referred to being free from slavery; thus, free from guilt and danger.[94] The aspect of slave revolts was directly linked to the issue of liberty since the slaves longing for liberty could only be resolved in martial acts due to Britain's unwillingness to assign the slaves the status of British

[90] Carey (2005) p. 132
[91] Brown (2006); p. 55 Haywood (2006) p. 11
[92] Brown (2006) p. 46
[93] Brown (2006) p. 452
[94] Brown (2006) p. 26

citizens.[95] The abolitionists demonstrated that the slaves' affirmation of British liberty was perverted into representing rebellion and revolt.[96] In reference to victimised slaves, Andrew Burn argued that "their only crime was, what I trust will ever characterise a true Englishman, an irresistible love of liberty".[97]

The emergence of democratic sentiments favoured the power of the individual accompanied by the responsibility of the empowered individual. Consequentially, slavery was not taken for granted but rather considered to be the result of human choices. Once slavery was described as the result of human action and choices, it was possible to argue that it could be abolished by human choices as well.[98]

The issue of empowering the less powerful leads to the question of women's involvement in anti-slavery campaigns. As I have pointed out in the discussion of the research on the boycott movement, the abstention of slave grown produce was considered to be an arena for women to gain access to political decision making. Besides being construed as the more sensible sex and being responsible for the consumption of food, boycotting sugar gave women the opportunity to not only take action but to get in the lead.[99] Clare Midgley and Deirdre Coleman both have pointed out that campaigning anti-slavery enabled women to advocate the rights of women.[100]

The struggle for women's rights was endorsed by Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, published in 1792. This pamphlet explicitly supported women's rights while women boycotting West Indian produce are depicted as advocating the issue of women's rights in more subtle ways by contemporary scholars. After all, anti-slavery arguments were based on the equality of all humankind; accordingly, they would also approve of the emancipation of women.[101]

Referring to racialised conceptions of Africans and slaves as savages, Deirdre Coleman argues that women were construed as the real savage, expressed in their sexuality. Consequentially, they would rely on the empowerment of their African counterpart to achieve the status of a mature citizen.[102] This becomes obvious in the abolitionist Hannah More's reference to this analogous depiction of women's sexuality and the Africans' savagery which she used herself in a racialised framework that favoured white women as the more sentient beings. She characterised the English marriage market as a form of slavery which enslaved young white women suggesting that white

[95] Haywood (2006) p. 58
[96] Anonymous (1792): *No Rum! - No Sugar! Or, The Voice of Blood*, p. 14 (see 4.3.4)
[97] Burn (1792): *A Second Address to the People of Great Britain*, p. 6 (see 4.3.6)
[98] Brown (2006) p. 153
[99] Oldfield (1995) p. 141
[100] Coleman (1994) p. 354; Midgley (2007) p. 41
[101] Midgley (2007) p. 41
[102] Coleman (1994) p. 355

women suffered to a greater extent than African slaves.[103] This example illustrates how abolitionists engaged in appropriating racialised stereotypes.

The discourses described in this section deal with the empowerment of the individual resulting in his or her responsibility regarding the injustice of slavery. This issue is closely connected to the legal rights of slaves and less powerful Britons themselves.

4.4.2 A New Era

Slavery had been established for a long time before it turned into an issue of public interest. As Christopher Leslie Brown has noted, slavery did not pose a field of activism for the populace until the end of the eighteenth century. Consequentially, there must have been a shift in society that allowed for slavery to arise as a problem.[104] William Fox correlated the subject of time with place and argued that Britons enjoyed a degree of felicity like never before.[105] Thus, the subject of anti-slavery was linked to trends of the eighteenth century. The pamphleteers of Abolitionism referred to a number of discourses that were supposed to be the product of its time. I will depict these discourses since they served the abolitionists to illustrate the urgency of abolishing the slave trade.

The 1790s in Britain are described as a turbulent time, influenced by a number of revolutionary events. However, they are also depicted as a period of economical stability.[106] Fox used the issue of stability to oppose the Briton's conditions of living with those of the slaves. In his argument, British citizens were invoked to engage in anti-slavery activism due to their wealth which formed the basis for beneficial action.[107] In contrast, Ian Haywood describes this period as marked by being informed about violent events such as the revolutions in France, America and Haiti and riots within the British territory. He argues that while such events did not represent a recent development in history, they did bring along a new intensity due to the fact that the majority of the people was able to read and thus be provided with information about these events. Hence, the emergence of a reading public led to the circulation of information.[108]

Yet, the innovation of circulating information did not merely refer to the people's literacy but also to the novelty of the information itself. The abolitionists argued that anti-slavery had become an issue due to the fact that its dimension of cruelty had been recently recorded and made public. Thus, the subject of knowledge proved to be essential to the reasoning of

[103] Coleman (1994) p. 354
[104] Brown (2006) p. 3
[105] Fox (1791): *An Address*, p. 2 (see 4.3.1)
[106] Carey (2005) p. 19
[107] Fox (1791): *An Address*, p. 2 (see 4.3.1)
[108] Haywood (2006) p. 2

abolitionist activists. They appropriated a scientific rhetoric to refer to this knowledge as objective evidence.[109] This evidence was presented to Parliament and attested by eye witnesses. Besides relating to the experience of eye witnesses, the pamphleteers enforced an objectivity based on numbers and calculations. They claimed to represent plain facts in calculating the implications of the consumption of West Indian produce precisely.[110]

The new age of Enlightenment was incompatible with the horrors of slavery and opposed its ideals as William Fox argued:

> "But we, in an enlightened age, have greatly surpassed, in brutality and injustice, the most ignorant and barbarous ages: and while we are pretending to the finest feelings of humanity, are exercising unprecedented cruelty."[111]

4.4.3 The Ethics of the Market

The literary critic Timothy Morton argues that capitalism represents the determining factor of William Fox's equalisation of sugar and blood[112] This link between the Capitalist system and morals is clarified by Charlotte Sussman by pointing out that Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, favoured demand over supply. Referring to abstention movements, she stresses the importance of understanding consumers as the prime mover of the market who are responsible for the consumption of goods as well as for their production. Accordingly, the consumers were confronted with reconsidering their consumption choices.[113]

Moreover, Sussman argues that sugar represented an immoral commodity that not only involved slave work but also direct British supervision. Thus, the immorality of sugar was not only determined by its mode of production but also by the degree of British participation.[114] As Christopher Leslie Brown notes, slavery became inconsistent with the British ideal of liberty and posed the risk of slave rebellions constituting an ideological and a physical threat at once (see 4.4.1). Slavery became an issue highly connected to trouble. The fear of the slaves' hatred and revenge formed one of these implications and explains the notion of a dramatic threat provoked by the market[115]

According to Sussman, the abolitionists utilised the slaves' bodies to illustrate these implications and to formulate a critique of the market[116] whose continuation would not only kill the slaves but torture the British

[109] Carey (2005) p. 45
[110] Instancing Fox's citation quoted in the beginning of this thesis.
[111] Fox (1791): *An Address*, p. 2 (see 4.3.1)
[112] Morton (2004) p. 11
[113] Sussman (2000) p. 22
[114] Sussman (2000) p. 29
[115] Brown (2006) p. 58; Haywood (2006) p.,16
[116] Sussman (2000) p. 16

as well.[117] For instance, British seamen were depicted as victims of the cruel market they were involved in. In the long term, they would import their psychological problems into the British territory and society.[118] The decadence caused by the state of things on the slave ships was linked to the subject of sugar since the consumption of rum formed one aspect of seamen's unethical attitude.[119] Ordinary British seamen represented victims rather than perpetrators while the captains of the slave ships and the slave owners in particular were construed as the evil per se. The slave owners' ruthless behaviour also concerned the mode of production since they were depicted as lazy while torturing the slaves to gain the maximum output. Hence, the ethics of the market concern the morals of the people involved in the trade as well as the mode of production. After all, the depiction of the lazy slave owner, contrasting the daily routine of the slaves, referred to the question of performance and justness of the market.

The aspects mentioned above refer to the market's influence on Britons; however, the abolitionists also considered issues that seemed to concern the African slaves while actually dealing with aspects experienced by Britons as well. The subject of the African family, torn apart by slave hunters, constitutes a stereotype exploited in several pamphlets. Seymour Drescher demonstrates that the experience of losing one's family and being alone in an alien place was comprehensible for Britons who migrated to the big cities. This way, the slaves' fate actually referred to the influence of the Capitalist system on the lives of the workers in Britain itself.[120] The comparison of crimes against property contrasted to crimes against liberty (see 4.4.1) forms a critique of the Capitalist system arguing that it favours economy over the people's lives. This critique was further enhanced by employing a sanguinary rhetoric to refer to the market. After all, the horrors of slavery emerged from the market's mechanisms:

> "the money paid, either for the slave, or for the produce of his labour, is paid to obtain that criminal possession"[121]

4.4.4 Globalisation

The system of the Transatlantic slave trade was by definition embedded into global processes. Hence, the subject needs to be interpreted in terms of globalisation. The British colonies supplied the home country with a number of food products; accordingly, criticising colonial foods often served to critisice the empire.[122] The boycott movement linked the abstention

[117] Haywood (2006) p. 25
[118] Coleman (1994) p. 347-248
[119] Coleman (1994) p. 344
[120] Drescher (1986) p. 163-164
[121] Fox (1791): *An Address*, p. 3 (see 4.3.1)
[122] Bewell (2003) p. 145

from slave grown sugar to the abolition of the slave trade arguing that an individual consumer choice could change global processes of the market and politics.[123] At the end of the eighteenth century, the global processes of the politics of the empire were experienced on the Britons' own bodies: they consumed food produced in the colonies and their health was construed in relation to colonial diseases (see 4.4.6).[124]

I already mentioned aspects of globalisation when I referred to the destruction of African families caused by Europeans and the Europeans' fear of slave rebellions in the last section. Yet, one crucial factor of global processes regarding the abstention movement is missing: its roots in the American abolition movement. The British abolition movement of the late eighteenth century represents somehow a successor of the American movement based on Quaker networks in the Old and the New World.[125] By way of example, the Quaker Anthony Benezet played a crucial role in exporting Abolitionism to Britain.[126] Throughout the campaign, British abolitionists knew fully well that Abolitionism did not represent a national issue. Consequentially, they formed global networks cooperating with American and French anti-slavery activists.[127]

Abolitionism was also linked to global processes in terms of Britain's role within the world order. After all, the loss of its North American colonies had questioned Britain's politics. Accordingly, the unsettledness originating from suffering defeat led to a crisis in British self-conception. Thus, Christopher Leslie Brown points out that Abolitionism benefited from the events in America since they promoted the discourse of structuring British society in new ways.[128]

4.4.5 Humanity and Virtue

The abolitionist argument of morals may be obscuring the real motivation to abolish slavery; however, it did constitute a crucial element in promoting anti-slavery and ultimately in viewing the world.[129] Moral arguments were most often expressed in terms of religious sentiments[130] which served the anti-slavery campaigners to deny any radical tendencies.[131] However, religious activists sometimes simply promoted religious objectives in terms of

[123] Sussman (2000) p. 43
[124] Bewell (2003) p. 19
[125] Brown (2006) p. 391
[126] Brown (2006) p. 137
[127] Carey (2002): http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition/clarkson.htm (accessed October 2012)
[128] Brown (2006) p. 182
[129] Drescher (1986) p. 166
[130] Carey (2005) p. 160
[131] Brown (2006) p. 29

evangelising the people.[132]

The moral arguments I am referring to were embedded into the eighteenth century ideal of sensibility. Christopher Leslie Brown argues that what he calls *moral capital* turned into an expression of empowerment suggesting that the moral code of sensibility claimed by decent citizens served to represent their supremacy.[133] After all, to impose a code of conduct that was actually accepted by the rank and file implied a preeminence in society. The link between power and a code of conduct is evident in the case of guidebooks which were published by those who could afford the printing costs.[134]

The aspect of sensibility, the capability to feel, was crucial in promoting anti-slavery since it formed the basis for sympathising with the slaves. Thus, abolitionist propaganda focused on the emotional and physical suffering of the slaves.[135] The sympathy aroused by the depiction of the victims was supposed to cause action. This was essential to the adoption of sensibility; some abolitionists argued that hypocrisy would not lead to action while real sensibility would cause beneficence.[136] Accordingly, those who did not oppose slavery openly were accused of being hypocritical and lacking real sensibility. These aspects are apparent in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem referring to the topos of sugar being polluted with the slaves' blood:

> "Gracious Heaven! At your meals you rise up, and pressing your hands to your bosoms, you lift up your eyes o God, and say, 'O Lord! Bless the food which thou hast given us!' A part of that food among most of you, is sweetened with Brother's Blood. 'Lord! Bless the food which thou hast given us!' O Blasphemy! Did God give food mingled with the Blood of the murdered? Will God bless the food which is polluted with the Blood of his own innocent children?"[137]

Yet, the contamination of sugar was not the only aspect that turned sugar into an immoral commodity. It was construed as being either useless when enjoyed with tea or corruptive when consumed as rum.[138] Furthermore, abolitionists argued that sugar undermined the concept of the strong, manly, British labourer and thus productivity.[139]

The discourse of humanity and humanitarian action in regard to the abstention movement was closely connected to gender stereotypes since women were supposed to represent sensibility and virtue:

> "I cannot suppose there exists a female, possessing a heart of sensibility, who can consider at length the detail of the facts which I have now

[132] Brown (2006) p. 335
[133] Brown (2006) p. 457
[134] Williams (1996) p. 78
[135] Carey (2005) p. 19
[136] Carey (2005) p. 39
[137] Quoted in Haywood (2006) p. 30
[138] Coleman (1994) p. 344
[139] Sussman (2000) p. 28

> hinted at, without many a deep sigh, without many an earnest wish, that the world may be fairly rid of a traffic which involves in it such complicated villainy; without feeling the deepest anxiety that the guilt of it may no longer belong to the land of her nativity, or the country of her constant residence."[140]

I will pursue to illustrate this aspect in the next section highlighting the role of women's bodies. Furthermore, anti-slavery activists exploited the stereotype of innocent children encouraging the original virtue of humans.[141]

4.4.6 Body and Race

As I noted in the introduction, the metaphors of cannibalism and blood employed by anti-slavery activists centre on the bodies of the slaves and the British consumers. Hence, it is inevitable to analyse the body in the context of Abolitionism and racialised attributions. The literary critic Mary A. Favret argues that illustrations of African slaves being tortured by Europeans suppress the depiction of the perpetrators' bodies.[142] The metaphors of cannibalism employed by the abstention movement did not refer to the perpetrators' bodies; however, they did make the consumers aware of the slaves' and their own bodies turning them into "sweet-toothed cannibals of the metropolis".[143]

In the eighteenth century, the body was subjected to a code of conduct which allowed the way a body was supposed to behave in public. This code was connected to the discourse of politeness and was discussed in various guidebooks.[144] Furthermore, the bodies of British citizens were also construed in relation to colonial diseases. On grounds of the empire's politics, diseases had travelled like never before and represented a threat to the British public. Accordingly, tropical diseases were construed as invading British society and territory, representing the dangers of colonialism.[145] Hence, Alan Bewell demonstrates that British discipline may not originate from moral codes themselves but from the idea that self-control was the only way to protect the British body expressing a paranoia surrounding alien substances.[146] The discourse of colonial diseases was appropriated to British workers whose bodies were tropicalised[147] as distinguished from the bourgeoisie which engaged in social practices of purity like bathing

[140] Anonymous (1792): *An Address to Her Royal Highness the Dutchess of York*, p. 10 (see 4.3.5)
[141] Oldfield (1995) p. 147
[142] Favret (1998) p. 36
[143] Plasa (2007) p. 237
[144] Goring (2005) p. 7
[145] Bewell (2003) p. 20
[146] Bewell (2003)p. 26; Grinnell (2010) p. 8
[147] Bewell (2003) p. 26

regularly.[148] As such, the working classes represented a threat to the middle classes in terms of health and in regard to alcohol.[149]

The issue of alcohol consumed by the working classes leads to perceptions of social fluidity. Sussman points out that fluids, either bodily fluids or for instance the ocean connecting people and commodities, refer to the problem of social fluidity.[150] Carey in turn argues that the outflow of bodily fluids instancing tears and blood constitutes a rhetoric figure based on sensibility to invoke sympathy.[151]

I will illustrate interpretations of consuming the bodies of slaves; however, I want to highlight the meaning of consuming food first. Food became deeply connected to the politics of the empire since a number of commodities like sugar and tea were produced in the British colonies. Hence, the issue of a national dish arose in the context of colonialism[152] linking the appropriation of discourses surrounding food and health. The discourse surrounding food and its threats from an alien sphere did not refer to colonial politics exclusively. In the light of industrialisation, the late eighteenth century construed the healthiness of food in terms of opposing nature and industry. In contrast to the Romantic ideal of nature, the urban population was depicted as being forced to consume food contaminated by industrial processes.[153] Thus, the discourse of polluted food commodities did not concern the foreign sphere solely; moreover, it was construed with respect to mechanisms of industrialisation and colonialism focusing on its implication on British bodies. At the same time, vegetarianism was promoted by a small group of activists arguing that the consumption of animals would contradict the moral code of sensibility and disregard God's creation. Furthermore, it was supposed to manipulate the human body and mind indicating the wrongful domination and manipulation of nature by humans.[154] Hence, the consumption of food was linked to the discourse of morals and referred to processes of colonialism, industrialisation and subsequently the romanticisation of nature.

These considerations are central to analyse the metaphors of cannibalism employed by the abstention movement since they referred to a commodity produced in the colonies and consumed by citizens of an industrialising nation. Roughly, references to cannibalism were expressed in three different discourses: food as the bodies producing it, the sugar's contamination with the slaves' flesh and bodily fluids, and cannibalism as punishment on the slave ships. The first two discourses are connected to perceptions of the body and race.

[148] Morton (2000) p. 3
[149] Sussman (2000) p. 28
[150] Sussman (2000) p. 98
[151] Carey (2005) p. 115
[152] Varey (1996) p. 42
[153] Varey (1996) p. 40
[154] Morton (2004) p. 5

When slaves arrived at a plantation, they were not integrated into the daily routine immediately. They first had to learn about the processes at the plantation resulting in a brutal acclimatisation called *seasoning*. This way, the slaves' development was linked to the breeding of animals or plants suggesting they were a commodity just like the food they were producing.[155] This term was used in the West Indies; yet, abolitionists adopted it to demonstrate the inhuman treatment of slaves. Hence, Sussman points out that even though the boycott campaigners claimed that the British consumers were powerful political agents, they still depicted the slaves as a combination of bodily functions neglecting their humanity and political agency.[156]

While the *seasoning* of slaves referred to the consumption of the slaves' bodies in a more subtle way, the pictures of cannibalism employed by William Fox and others accused the consumers of being cannibals and murderers openly. These metaphors were supposed to shock the British consumers and evoke disgust. The aspect of disgust was exaggerated most grotesquely by Andrew Burn (see 4.3.6). He linked the production of sugar to the discourse of colonial diseases and racialised perceptions of health arguing that Africans were prone to diseases to a greater extent than Europeans. He evoked a paranoia surrounding bodily substances in sugar and rum centring on the cleanliness of the consumers' bodies rather than linking the abstention from slave grown sugar to motives of virtue and sensibility.[157] In this pamphlet, Africans are described as disgusting due to their race while other pamphleteers inverted racialised stereotypes construing the European consumers as the real savages.

In accusing the European consumers of being cannibals, these pamphleteers inverted the image of African cannibals declaring the Europeans as the real savages:

> "No longer can it be pretended, that Africa is a barbarous, uncultivated land, inhabited by a race of savages inferior to the rest of the human species."[158]

The racialised discourse of cannibalism served the abolitionists to question stereotypes of civilised and uncivilised peoples to subsequently locate the cultural other within British society itself. Moreover, Deirdre Coleman points out that the idea of consuming the slaves' flesh and bodily fluids did not only invert perceptions of savagery but undermined the image of the Eucharist (see 5.2). Some anti-slavery activists exploited this image and depicted the African slave as an interpretation of Christ marking the consumption of West Indian sugar as a blasphemous act.[159]

[155] Coleman (1994) p. 349
[156] Sussman (2000) p. 17
[157] Burn (1792): *A Second Address to the People of Great Britain*, p. 9 (see 4.3.6)
[158] Burn (1792): *A Second Address to the People of Great Britain*, p. 9 (see 4.3.6)
[159] Coleman (1994) p. 349

Furthermore, Coleman argues that these metaphors of cannibalism constitute a sexualised discourse. She refers to Charlotte Sussman who interprets the role of women within the boycott movement arguing that women were supposed to defend the domestic sphere in protecting it from ominous and foreign substances.[160] Coleman endorses Sussman's analysis in examining the significance of women's bodies in relation to the consumption of West Indian sugar. She points out that the metaphors of canibalism evoked by abolitionists did not merely refer to discourses of hygiene and guilt but to the subject of sexuality and race. According to her, the penetration of the slaves' bodily substances into the British body represents sexual intercourse; hence, the cannibalistic images allude to the issue of racial amalgamation. In this context, women are responsible for keeping the British domestic sphere pure and clean in abiding by moral codes of sexuality which in this regard served to ensure a racial unity.[161] Carl Plasa adopts this interpretation and argues that the bodily fluids mentioned by abstention campaigners allegorise the slaves' semen threatening Britain's society and integrity.[162] This interpretation illustrates the abolitionists' exploitation of racialised and sexualised discourses framed by an obsession of racial purity.

[160] Sussman (2000) p. 126
[161] Coleman (1994) p. 356
[162] Plasa (2007) p. 238

Chapter 5

Interpreting Cannibalism

This chapter deals with interpretations of cannibalism concentrating on its cultural implications. I will not illustrate the subject in reference to the boycott movement since I already discussed it in 3.1 and 4.4.6. In its most common interpretation, cannibalism is construed as a signifier of the other. Furthermore, cannibalism usually refers to the realm of myths given that it was a subject of speculation rather than a practice that was actually observed and reported by witnesses.[1] The first section of this chapter discusses popular images of cannibalism to illustrate the way people of the 1790s could have perceived the issue of cannibalism. The second section deals with the religious figure of the Holy Eucharist whereas the third section illustrates the practice of medical cannibalism focusing on the meaning of blood. The last section examines theoretical conceptions surrounding the topic of cannibalism.

5.1 Popular Images of Cannibalism

Peter J. Kitson argues that the Romantic period encountered cannibalism in five overlapping literary discourses: politics, Abolitionism, colonial and Gothic fiction, and shipwreck narratives.[2] Regarding politics, the French Revolution provided the British public with images of anarchy which were translated into images of cannibalism. Revolutionaries were accused of exhibiting a cannibalistic appetite[3] as several cartoons of that time suggest.[4]

Still, the realm of colonialism and slavery constituted an area that exploited the subject of cannibalism most conspicuously.[5] I have already

[1] Pieterse (1992) p. 114. For a discussion of the subject, see William Arens's *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (1979).

[2] Kitson (2001) p. 209

[3] Kitson (2001) p. 209

[4] Instancing James Gillray's *Un Petit Souper a la Parisienne, or A Family of Sans-Culottes Refreshing after the Fatigues of the Day* (1792).

[5] Kitson (2001) p. 212

demonstrated that abolitionists employed metaphors of cannibalism; however, pro-slavery activist applied a sanguinary rhetoric as well. They suggested that revolting slaves drank the slave owners' blood linking the subject of cannibalism to the discourse of colonialism.[6]

Colonialism represented a common context of discussing cannibalism in the era of transatlantic slavery. In antiquity and the Middle Ages, images of cannibalism usually concerned the European continent itself referring to conflicts, famines, or mythological narratives.[7] The conquest of the Americas expanded the discourse of cannibalism to a new area linking it to spatial and racialised conceptions. The people of the Caribbean were told to practise ritual cannibalism; hence, the description of the Antillean inhabitants subsequently became synonymous with man-eater. The word cannibal derives from the word Carib and was finally distinguished from its origin when it was first registered in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1796.[8] Hence, the term cannibalism turned into encyclopaedic knowledge in the 1790s linking the subject of man-eating to the Caribbean and therefore to the place of sugar production.

Jan Nederveen Pieterse argues that narratives of missionaries and explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century exploited the discourse of cannibalism. He points out that these narratives appropriated the discourse relocating it from the Americas to the interior of Africa. His research focuses on images of Africans; accordingly, Pieterse does not take into account myths of cannibalism in the Pacific region.[9] Furthermore, he demonstrates that the discussion of cannibalism shifted from a fearful to an ironic depiction of the subject; however, this relates to a period past the 1790s.[10]

The discourse of exploring unknown territory was related to adventures; thus, cannibalism served to illustrate the courage of the imperilled explorer. The story of *Robinson Crusoe*,[11] written by Daniel Defoe and published in 1719, describes the adventures of a castaway who faces the threat of cannibals on a lonely, Caribbean island. In the book, the cannibals signify savagery and the other. Owing to the popularity of the book, its depiction of cannibals can be considered as a relevant source of interpreting cannibalism in the 1790s.

However, the figure of a castaway encountering cannibalism does not necessarily relate to a cultural other; it may refer to Europeans engaging in

[6] Kitson (2001) p. 212
[7] Pieterse (1992) p. 114
[8] Kitson (2001) p. 208
[9] Pieterse (1992) p. 116
[10] Pieterse (1992) p. 119
[11] The book was originally entitled *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoque; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by Pirates.*

cannibalism in order to survive. Hence, Peter J. Kitson argues that what he calls *survival cannibalism* represented a possible threat to Romantic society reminding the enlightened self of its basic needs which threaten to turn it into a cannibal in the light of exceptional circumstances. Yet, white cannibalism did not simply serve to describe the European self in distress but also to discriminate the other within European society. In Britain, the Irish and the lower classes were accused of engaging in cannibalism as well.[12] Thus, cannibalism usually may be discussed in the context of colonialism; still, it also referred to the European continent itself instancing Gothic fiction.

Europeans also encountered cannibalism in discourses that were not necessarily linked to violence, distress, and otherness. Parts of the human body, blood in particular, were used as remedies promising cure; this aspect will be discussed in section 5.3. The Holy Eucharist constitutes another representation of cannibalism within Western culture. This term refers to the Christian ritual of consuming bread and wine and considering it to represent or to be the flesh and blood of Christ. Owing to the religious arguments of the anti-slavery campaigners, I will illustrate the subject in the next section and interpret in terms of defining and outlining a group.

5.2 The Holy Eucharist

The Holy Eucharist does not represent a homogeneous figure in Christian belief; in fact, its interpretation differs within Christian belief. I will not illustrate the different interpretations of the Holy Eucharist owing to the different Christian groups involved in campaigning anti-slavery. Rather, I will discuss the implications of the implementation of the doctrine in the early thirteenth century and explain its relevance to the issues of collectivisation and marginalisation. I will interpret the figure of the Holy Eucharist as a dissociation from Judaism in linking Christianity to antiquity.

The rite of the Holy Communion gains its relevance from the vital necessity of eating and drinking since our survival is determined by guilt as it causes an elimination—we destroy whatever we consume.[13] The issue of guilt is central to the Christian faith and thereby the rite of the Holy Eucharist. The Christians are reminded of Christ's pain in consuming wine and bread representing the body and blood of Christ which refers to the sacrifice of Christ and the believers' salvation.[14] The community of Christians is substantiated by consuming Christ's blood and body collectively. This way, the believers establish a blood relationship by envisioning the suffering of Christ which represents the creation of a body by defining its members in

[12] Kitson (2001) p. 207
[13] Böhme (2000) p. 393
[14] von Braun (2001) p. 350

terms of inclusion.[15] However, the rite also constitutes a group in outlining a body against infidels. I will argue that the Christian symbolism of blood constitutes a dissociation from Judaism.

In Judaism, the Creator possesses the blood of all living since it is supposed to reproduce the being's soul. This supposition forms the basis for rites like kosher butchering or the restriction of women during menstruation. The restricted usage of blood in Judaism contradicts the Christian rite of the Holy Communion fundamentally. Hence, I will demonstrate that the Christian appropriation of blood differs from Jewish rites to outline the younger religion from its predecessor in construing it as the antiquity's successor. Nevertheless, both faiths share the interpretation of blood representing substantiality. In the Christian exegesis, blood permits the believer to experience divinity on the basis of his or her own body.[16]

There are a number of analogies between Judaism and Christianity; however, the Christian symbolic of blood refers to an intentional avoidance of its Jewish heritage. The literalist interpretation of the Holy Eucharist was implemented as a consequence of the Fourth Council of the Lateran in 1215 in order to unify Christian groups. The council also accounted for the enforcement of branding Jews with the yellow badge.[17] From this point on, myths of Host desecrations appeared regularly and served to accuse disbelievers, for instance Jews but also faithless Christians, of the crime. The connection between the implementation of the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist and the visualisation of disbelievers illustrates the church's effort to define a Christian identity in marginalising infidels and signifying believers.[18]

The Fourth Council of the Lateran accounted for anti-Semitic politics; however, it does not represent the first attempt to dissociate Christianity from Judaism. The Gospel according to John includes anti-semitic sentiments and construes Christ as the inheritor of Greek mythology in fraternising him with the ancient god Dionysus who is the Greek deity of wine and ecstasy.[19] The writer Michael Köhlmeier, trained in politics, German philology, mathematics, and philosophy, argues that the figures of Dionysus and Apollo merged into the figure of Christ. He points out that the union of the ecstatic and the rational deity became so powerful that they replaced their father Zeus which explains the prosperousness of Jesus Christ and thus the new religion of Christianity.[20] The power of Dionysus (and thus Christ) arises from his status as being the favourite of his father Zeus and from the assumption that he unites all other gods according to the Greek Mythology.[21] A short

[15] von Braun (2001) p. 349
[16] von Braun (2001) p. 348
[17] von Braun (2001) p. 356
[18] von Braun (2001) p. 350-351
[19] Hörisch (1992) p. 57-58
[20] Köhlmeier (1999) p. 615
[21] Giebel (2010) p. 86

examination of the myth of the Dionysus endorses the hypothesis that the figure of Christ is partly based on the archaic deity of wine and ecstasy.

Dionysus is a resurrected and salvific son of god whose myth accounts for the original sin. In a version of Greek mythology, the Titans dismember, cook and consume Dionysus whereupon Zeus strikes them with a lightning; Dionysus is revitalised while the human race arises from the ashes marked by guilt. However, the devotees of the Dionysian Mysteries were permitted to engage in specific rites to atone for their guilt anticipating the rite of baptism.[22] The oral assimilation of a deity, part of the Dionysian Mysteries as well as the Christian liturgy, is common in various cultures and causes a murder and victim which serves to effect the continuity of the world.[23]

A number of other features attributed to Christ refer to the figure of Dionysus. In this context, Dionysus's role as the god of wine is most relevant since I interpreted the Holy Eucharist as a reference to the Christian assimilation of the Greek deity. Besides construing the Christian doctrine of the Holy Communion as an appropriation of archaic rites, I want to stress its relevance in terms of creating a body based on the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Linking the figure of Christ to Greek mythology enabled the Christian doctrine to dissociate from Judaism and legitimate Christianity against the older religion. Hence, Christian symbolism does not only secede from Judaism in appropriating the subject of blood differently but in linking blood to wine and thus Christ to the figure of Dionysus. Furthermore, the Holy Eucharist refers to eating and drinking in linking a religious rite to a vital necessity which is appropriated to outline a body. This interpretation of the figure of the Holy Eucharist illustrates the linkage between metaphors of cannibalism and collectivisation.

5.3 Medical Cannibalism

The issue of cannibalism leads to the question of perceptions surrounding the ingestion of human bodily substances. Today's medicine is able to utilise human parts and implant them into another or the same person instancing transplantations, surrogate motherhood, or blood transfusions including the subject of doping. However, the idea of utilising parts of the human body did not simply emerge with modern medicine; rather, it is based on concepts that seem to have fascinated humans for a long time. The actions mentioned above are hardly associated with cannibalism as they do not refer to the image of consuming another human in terms of eating or drinking. However, the aspect of utilising human parts as a remedy did imply the oral incorporation of human substances in former times.

[22] Giebel (2010) p. 82; von Braun (2001) p. 268
[23] Böhme (2000) p. 392

Blood in particular constituted a substance that was highly associated with powerful meanings instancing the discussion of the figure of the Holy Eucharist in section 5.2. Piero Camporesi wrote a history of the cultural perception of blood including medical concepts. He points out that today's society favours sterility and cleanliness while former societies experienced blood more visibly instancing not only executions but also the consumption of food like black pudding.[24] The consumption of blood did not simply refer to meat dishes; rather, it did involve the subject of consuming animal and human blood in order to cure diseases such as epilepsy.[25]

The usage of drinking blood probably refers to ancient writers since the drinking of the gladiators' blood was said to heal epilepsy in Roman antiquity.[26] This custom may derive from ancient practices; however, the historian Wolfgang Schild argues that it also constituted a phenomenon of the Modern era relating to the blood of executed people.[27] This practice was based on the idea that the blood of the living possessed particular properties; more precisely, it was associated with a being's vitality. Hence, the blood of prematurely deceased was supposed to capture their vigour explaining the supposition that it would cure epilepsy whose symptoms were understood as a temporary death.[28] Furthermore, the rite was linked to religious beliefs since Christian symbolism appropriated blood to a great extent construing Christ's blood as an elixir which would heal the relationship between the believers and God. Hence, it seemed only logical that blood would cure epilepsy which was referred to as the *Sacred Disease*.[29]

Epilepsy was also supposed to be healed when medicated with elixirs gained from human brains or mummies.[30] Pastes made from egyptian mummies and skulls had represented a remedy not only to treat epilepsy, but several diseases, for centuries when practitioners of the eighteenth century discussed its assets and drawbacks.[31] Richard Sugg, scholar of literature, argues that this therapy was increasingly considered to be disgusting at the end of the eighteenth century.[32] Hence, this period faced a shift in perceiving not only the human body but consequentially medical concepts. Camporesi demonstrates that particularly in Britain, blood transfusions replaced the practice of sucking blood for medical reasons.[33] Accordingly, the latter phenomenon was related to archaic concepts and the realm of mystics as the

[24] Camporesi (2004) p. 10
[25] Camporesi (2004)p. 41
[26] Schild (2007) p. 147
[27] Camporesi (2004) p. 41; Schild (2007) p. 150
[28] Schild (2007) p. 129
[29] Schild (2007) p. 139
[30] Camporesi (2004) p. 24; Sugg (2011) p. 232
[31] Sugg (2011) p. 230
[32] Sugg (2011) p. 250
[33] Camporesi (2004) p. 70

figure of the vampire,[34] popularised in the Victorian era, suggests.[35]

Nevertheless, the utilisation of parts of the human body such as blood and fat continued right to the nineteenth century. However, as in the case of blood transfusions, the substances were applied as proccessed remedies rather then let the patient receive the substances directly from another human.[36]

5.4 Theorising Cannibalism

The act of cannibalism, either witnessed or rather imagined, constitutes a discourse that dehumanises the accused. It is often interpreted as a explanation and justification for colonial politics since it is deeply connected to images of Europeans exploring and colonising the world; however, Jan Nederveen Pieterse argues that this interpretation hardly captures the complex implications of representing cannibalism entirely.[37] He points out that the image of cannibals served to define a Christian civilisation.[38] He subsequently demonstrates that the European appropriation of cannibalism undermined the notion of the noble savage contrasting the idea to search for the lost paradise in exotic places and thus opposing the romanticisation of the tropics as biblical Eden or, more precisely, construing them as a barbaric and pagan place.[39]

However, interpretations of cannibalism do not necessarily refer to colonisation and otherness as Maggie Kilgour's discussion of the subject suggests. She starts her examination by defining food as a basic concept of incorporation and internalisation and points out that we consume what we consider to be good. Hence, she argues that food constitutes a simple model of choosing and defining morals.[40] This notion refers to the idea of incorporating morals when eating. The literary critic Paul Youngquist suggests that the Romantic era construed the image of a healthy and autonomous individual whose well-being and morality were regulated by its ingestion.[41] Furthermore, Kilgour demonstrates that the consumption of food dissolves the binary of inside and outside which she considers to be a fundamental binary in human conception since it defines the self and the other; hence, food represents a threat to the self.[42] This aspect is enhanced by the idea of individualism which construes the individual as a single body severed from other individuals and only connected to them through their interest of protecting the basic human

[34] Instancing Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* which was published in 1897.
[35] Camporesi (2004) p. 72
[36] Camporesi (2004) p. 70-72
[37] Pieterse (1992) p. 115
[38] Pieterse (1992) p. 116
[39] Pieterse (1992) p. 117
[40] Kilgour (1990) p. 4
[41] Youngquist (2004) p. 240
[42] Kilgour (1990) p. 7

rights which alludes to private property. After all, there is one property that each enlightened individual possesses—its body.[43] Hence, the bodily exchange constitutes a fundamental way of capturing the other.[44]

This concept forms the basis for Kilgour's analysis. She argues that the phenomenon of cannibalism usually serves to accuse a group which refuses to be incorporated stating that "the image of cannibalism is frequently connected with the failure of words as a medium, suggesting that people who cannot *talk* to each other *bite* each other".[45] This interpretation is closely linked to colonial politics since it refers to the depiction of savagery which was deployed to justify colonialism under the pretext of civilising the colonies. However, this argument also applied to groups and disputes within Europe. Kilgour demonstrates that the issue of cannibalism relates to an ideology which denies equality as it evokes the opposition of eater and eaten; hence, one can only choose to consume the other in order to not be eaten by the other.[46]

Thus, cannibalism forms a subject that questions the definition of human existence and that relates to the discourse of civilisation. From a Western perspective, it is either construed as a signifier of savagery or as a consequence of distress. The first aspect usually refers to the depiction of the other while the second questions the very self reminding the enlightened individual of its basic needs. Kilgour points out that shipwreck narratives of Romantic fiction encountered white cannibalism as the last chance to survive. Hence, she argues that the fascination with the phenomenon of cannibalism partly derives from the fact that even the enlightened and civilised self may turn into a cannibal facing the threat of starving.[47] Moreover, she relates the subject to Gothic fiction which appropriates a number of undead characters illustrating the idea that the dead never leave but haunt the living and argues that this image also applies to notions of cannibalism. After all, the consumption of another human involves its incorporation; thus, cannibalism represents the internalisation and materialisation of the other and at the same time the constant remembrance of having destroyed the other.[48]

The cultural scientist Christina von Braun argues that Christian symbolism appropriated the subject of blood to materialise the concepts of the Christian doctrine. She demonstrates that these concepts were highly theoretical and abstract; thus, blood was utilised to point to reality and let people experience religious doctrines on the basis of their bodily functions.[49] Camporesi depicts blood as a substance that was associated with a being's

[43] Kilgour (1990) p. 144
[44] Kilgour (1990) p. 154
[45] Kilgour (1990) p. 16
[46] Kilgour (1990) p. 18
[47] Kilgour (1990) p. 149
[48] Kilgour (1990) p. 173
[49] von Braun (2007) p. 356

spirit as it referred to the basic functioning of the human body as well as to spiritual meanings. The mysterious fluid, hidden inside the body, inspired the imagination as it offered the possibility to relate religious concepts to the human body.[50] I consider these interpretations of the cultural appropriation of blood as an important aspect of the boycott movement's propaganda due to its exploitation of a sanguineous rhetoric in the context of evoking images of cannibalism.

The subject of cannibalism also refers to economical aspects. The literary critic Crystal Bartolovich refers to the link between images of cannibals and the conquest of the New World (see 5.1) arguing that both phenomena were interrelated. Furthermore, she construes them as a reference to the emergence of capitalism as she interprets the colonisation of the Americas as the expression of a cannibalistic appetite (see 4.4.3). In this interpretation, capitalism constitutes a self-destructive system which ultimately devours humans.[51] Analogically, Bartolovich points out that metaphors of cannibalism are frequently used to describe a crisis in the relation of production and consumption arguing that the market would devour itself.[52]

[50] Camporesi (2004) p. 54
[51] Bartolovich (1998) p. 227
[52] Bartolovich (1998) p. 234

Chapter 6

Conclusion

I have outlined a body of British abolitionists propagating the abstention from slave grown sugar from the West Indies to force politics to abolish the slave trade and ultimately slavery. These campaigners originated from the bourgeoisie and were financially secure; however, they did come from different religious backgrounds although Quakers took the lead in the campaign. The activists shared the will to manipulate politics and applied strategies which anticipated popular methods of today's politics aiming at influencing and bypassing Parliamentary power. This aspect is crucial to the implementation of the boycott as religious Dissenters represented the majority of the campaigners. Their political power was rather limited despite their economical status. Also, the campaigners addressed the less powerful of British society.

Based on my research, I do not consider it likely that the campaigners described in this thesis shared a hidden agenda in terms of economical interests. Rather, they seemed to propagate anti-slavery to advocate a number of other discourses linked to the subject of empowerment. The 1790s encountered the revolutionary events in France and Haiti which challenged the relation between sovereign and people. These events polarised British politics as well as the public and led to a discourse surrounding the rights of men including the power of the people, the rights of women, and anti-slavery sentiments. Seymour Drescher points out that slavery constituted the most extreme form of bondage; hence, anti-slavery was appropriated to discuss the issue of liberty and power. The slave trade was embedded into political and economical processes; the campaigners of the sugar boycott did not explicitly criticise these processes and the power relations behind them but the immorality of the institution of slavery.

The bourgeoisie stressed the subject of humanity and virtue arguing that slavery violated these ideals. Hence, they disapproved of slavery on grounds of moral reasoning. Moral supremacy turned into a strategy of empowerment as it allowed the people to controvert political processes in referring to a code of conduct. As Foucault has pointed out, this code of conduct was linked to

the control over one's own body and served to outline the emerging middle classes. Christopher Leslie Brown argues that what he calls *moral capital* constituted the claim of empowering the virtuous people. Hence, morals represented a key theme in advocating the abolition of the slave trade. As I have demonstrated, the activists of the sugar boycott referred to a number of discourses surrounding the issue of slavery. These discourses implied a shift in perceiving the power and rights of men. However, I have to note that the same period faced the colonisation of Australia accompanied by the involuntary settlement of Britons and the harsh oppression of indigenous Australians. Hence, the ideals of liberty and virtue hardly caused the abolishment of the slave trade in 1807. Nevertheless, the anti-slavery campaign revealed the power of moral arguments. Additionally, the idea to advocate a boycott in terms of consumer action indicates that the activists believed in the power of the common consumer.

The moral incompatibility of consuming sugar was expressed in its equalisation with the slaves' bodily substances. As William Fox put it, sugar was "steeped in the blood of our fellow-creatures".[1] This sanguinary rhetoric and the more explicit accusation of cannibalism represented the most haunting strategy in advocating the abstention from slave grown sugar. As I have pointed out in 3.1, scholars of history and literature studies interpret these metaphors of cannibalism as the inversion of a colonial discourse and as a sexual metaphor. The horror of consuming human substances was enhanced by the taboo of merging the bodies of Europeans and Africans. However, I argue that these metaphors invoked images that transcend the subject of colonialism and race. Nevertheless, I consider these two aspects as the major themes of the utilisation of metaphors of cannibalism in the context of the boycott movement.

These metaphors clearly marked the transgression of moral codes. They challenged the self-conception of the enlightened individual and notions of civilisation. In its most common appropriation, the subject of cannibalism served to accuse the other. In regard to the self, the depiction of cannibalism could refer to the loss of identity as it was frequently exploited in shipwreck narratives. Hence, a European engaging in cannibalism signified the ultimate loss of identity and the detachment from its origin.

The discussion of the figure of the Holy Eucharist and the practise of medical cannibalism suggests that these metaphors did not simply imply the violation of the ideal of Enlightenment but that they did also involve notions of blood and human substances possessing spiritual and medicative properties. Hence, the consumption of sugar crossed boundaries of the Western self. Furthermore, the idea of consuming the slaves' blood and flesh when consuming West Indian sugar might be associated with the actual transformation of the consumers' bodies. This perception refers to archaic

[1] Fox (1791): *An Address*, p. 2-3 (see 4.3.1)

conceptions as well as to the emerging standards of hygiene.

According to the premise *you are what you eat* the consumption of another human includes its remembrance. Hence, the consumption of sugar represents the materialisation of the suffering slaves inside the consumers' bodies. In other words: the campaigners of the sugar boycott may have employed metaphors of cannibalism and blood to let the consumers of sugar actually experience slavery on grounds of their own bodies. Also, it denied the consumers the possibility to disclaim the horrors of the slave trade and slavery; it forced them to realise slavery.

Owing to the abolitionists' sanguinary rhetoric, I analysed meanings of blood instancing its medical use and the figure of the Holy Eucharist. Following the interpretation above, Christina von Braun suggests that blood constitutes a substance which refers to reality using the example of Christian symbolism. My analysis of the Holy Eucharist stresses the role of blood in construing and outlining a group; moreover, the rite relates to archaic concepts. Michel Foucault argued that the deceasing regime of aristocracy obtained its self-conception from the importance of lineage which was associated with blood. Hence, blood served as a reference to a declining system which involved slavery.

The metaphors of cannibalism and blood related to savagery within Britain's society which was associated with another place or another time. In construing cannibalism as a practice of enlightened Britons, the campaigners of the boycott movement attacked the hypocrisy of defining citizens of the Empire as a cultural and moral supremacy. The imperial system including the trade in human flesh was contrasted with the ideal of sensibility and virtue. Thus, the ideals and codes of individual behaviour were not compatible with the prevalent economical system. This allowed abolitionist activists to combat slavery on grounds of individual behaviour and consumer choices.

Furthermore, the interpretation of the metaphors of cannibalism as a reference to the taboo of sexual intercourse between Europeans and Africans illustrates the idea of sugar transgressing personal and domestic boundaries. The enlightened individual was construed as a single body; hence, any incorporation represented a possible threat to the self. As Charlotte Sussman has demonstrated, the consumption of slave grown sugar violated the ideal of virtuous women, social boundaries and the purity of the domestic space. The latter referred to the households of the families as well as to the British nation. Hence, the appropriation of metaphors of cannibalism constituted the attempt to outline the British bourgeoisie as the core of British society determined by morality. Accordingly, the British bourgeoisie aimed at undermining the influence from the outside which threatened to penetrate the permeable boundaries of British society.

The abstention campaigners aimed at uncovering the connection between domestic consumption and colonial production in illustrating the consequences for the people involved by means of their bodies. Both, the

consuming and the producing bodies were harmed. Due to the unequal power relation, consumers were construed as being responsible to intervene in order to create a balance. The existing inbalance represented the consumers' guilty conscience; moreover, it constituted a threat regarding the slaves' revenge. The images of human blood and flesh evoked by the anti-slavery campaigners visualised the violence against the slaves and materialised them on the basis of the consumers' bodies which constituted a bodily pollution.

This idea resembles today's discourse of fair trade and the anxiety surrounding the consumption of goods produced ostensibly unvisible in Third World Countries or remote places. The discussion of products leading to a bodily pollution such as chemicals in fabrics or antibiotics in meat is similiar to the abstention movement's argument. These notions are not necessarily linked to remote places; however, they do relate to the aspect of a production out of sight and out of control. Thus, the action of consumer choice implies the will of supervising the production and subsequently one's own body and mind.

In conclusion, the campaigners of the boycott movement argued that the consumption of West Indian sugar would actually transform the consumers' bodies and undermine their virtue. The activists appropriated the discourse of bodily purity and declared the consumption of slave grown sugar as a taboo since it would merge the bodies of the African slaves and the European consumers. Ultimately, these metaphors of cannibalism and blood served to illustrate the archaic aspect of slavery and its immorality. Furthermore, abolitionist activists established morals as a strategy of empowerment and as a means of manipulating politics.

Chapter 7

Summary and Outlook

In the late eighteenth century, the British public encountered a discussion centring on the morals of the slave trade and slavery. Anti-slavery activism had already been established in Northern America when British campaigners adopted their strategies and engaged in popular politics. The consumer action of boycotting West Indian produce represented a method to advocate anti-slavery and to include the populace to bypass Parliamentary power.

The advocates of the boycott movement argued that British politics were forced to abolish the slave trade and slavery as soon as the sale of West Indian sugar would prove to be unprofitable. Hence, the consumers were portrayed as potent agents of the market who had to be informed about their power. Anti-slavery sentiments were based on moral grounds; however, the campaigners did not rely on moral arguments solely. Rather, they manipulated the consumers' imagination and evoked images of cannibalism to convince them to abstain from sugar.

These metaphors of cannibalism centred on the bodies of the African slaves and the European consumers. I chose to base my research on the theoretical work of Michel Foucault since these metaphors dealt with the body and served to illustrate an injustice to subsequently question power relations. Furthermore, I emphasised the meaning of blood as it played a crucial role in abolitionist rhetoric. I divided my research into two parts. The first part comprised of an empirical research analysing the pamphleteers of the sugar boycott and their network. I outlined a group of activists united in their will to fight slavery and by their economical background. Moreover, I analysed the pamphlets produced by these campaigners and others leading to the second part of my research: I analysed the movement's appropriation of discourses of the 1790s and illustrated their connection to anti-slavery sentiments. These discourses were closely connected to revolutionary events involving the rights of men, global processes of the market, and conceptions of humanity and racialised body images.

Owing to the subject, I analysed implications of cannibalism and blood

to pursue the interpretation of the metaphors employed by the boycott movement. Recent studies suggest that these metaphors represented the inversion of a colonial discourse and a sexual discourse. I do embrace this interpretation; still, I extended the interpretation of cannibalism to trace further meanings. I interpreted the boycott movement's excessive utilisation of a sanguinary rhetoric as a means to relate the consumption of West Indian produce to a declining regime which was incompatible with the ideals of Enlightenment. Hence, I argue that the metaphors of cannibalism and blood did not simply refer to another place but also to another time. They represented the knowledge of one's own guilt and accordingly the fear of revenge originating from the immorality of the market. Also, they converged emerging standards of hygiene and archaic concepts of cannibalism and blood. While the modern concept of sanitation and the archaic notion of human substances possessing special properties seem to belong to different epochs, they both share the assumption that the consumption of bodily substances actually changes the body and the self.

As I have noted, the analyses of the abstention movement lack empirical historical research. I described a circle of abolitionists and their background; however, an extended examination could reveal further motivations of propagating the abstention from West Indian sugar. I disregarded the meaning of East Indian sugar in this thesis because the campaigners advocated abstention rather than substitution. Nevertheless, the subject requires a detailed research comprising a possible connection between the activists and stakeholders of the *British East India Company*. Generally, the boycott is not researched in terms of economic history; hence, the obvious question of the movement's success cannot be answered adequately. As important as it seems to analyse the sales of West Indian sugar, it still appears to be too complex considering the global implications and not rewarding enough as the movement did not cause the abolition of the slave trade immediately.

Regarding the impact of the Quaker based *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade* and the commitment of Quakers concerning anti-slavery sentiments, it seems to be promising to analyse the movement in the context of Quakerism. The networks of Quakers offer the possibility to examine global interactions and strategies of religious groups to gain influence. Quakers disapprove of the consumption of alcohol; hence, the movement may be interpreted as a campaign against alcohol since the consumption of sugar included rum. Yet, the movement possibly opposed the distribution of alcohol at all or solely the consumption of rum. The latter can be interpreted as a strategy to promote the production of beer which potentially refers to a discourse of opposing domestic and colonial production.

These considerations form possible research questions which deserve study to attain significant evidence.

Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Der transatlantische Sklavenhandel stellte Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts in der britischen Gesellschaft keine Selbstverständlichkeit mehr dar und wurde zum Gegenstand einer politischen Debatte, die nicht nur auf parlamentarischer Ebene geführt wurde, sondern auch das Volk als Entscheidungsträger miteinschloss. Zu Beginn der 1790er-Jahre propagierten Abolitionisten den Konsumboykott von Zucker aus den karibischen Kolonien, um so die Abschaffung des Sklavenhandels zu erzwingen. Dem Boykott lag die Idee zugrunde, dass die Produktion allein über die Nachfrage gesteuert wurde und dass die Konsumenten—dasVolk—somit die Produktion steuerten. Somit wurde der Konsumboykott als Ermächtigung des Volkes stilisiert.

Die Aktivisten des Konsumboykotts konstruierten den Konsum von karibischem Zucker und Rum als eine unmoralische Handlung, da diese Waren über Sklavenarbeit hergestellt wurden. Neben dieser Argumentation verfolgten sie eine zweite Strategie, die den Konsum von Zucker mit Kannibalismus gleichsetzte.

Die Idee, dass die Konsumenten mit dem Zucker das Fleisch, Blut und andere Körperflüssigkeiten der Sklaven aufnehmen würden, rückte den Körper in den Mittelpunkt der Kampagne. Aus diesem Grund habe ich meine Forschung an Michel Foucaults Körper- und Machttheorien angelehnt. Ich habe eine Gruppe von Abolitionisten untersucht, die den Boykott von Zucker propagierten, um die von ihnen produzierten Pamphlete und ihre Netzwerke zu analysieren. Neben diesem empirisch angelegten Teil habe ich mich mit verschiedenen Diskursen der 1790er-Jahre und ihren Einfluss auf die Kampagne auseinander gesetzt, sowie mit kulturellen Bedeutungen von Kannibalismus und Blut.

Die von den Abolitionisten benutzten Kannibalismusmetaphern werden in der Forschung als Umkehrung eines kolonialen Diskurses und als sexuelle Metapher interpretiert. Da sich die Boykottaufrufe vorwiegend an Frauen als Konsumentinnen richteten und die Körper von Sklaven in den Mittelpunkt rückten, ist die Kampagne unter dem Aspekt eines sexualisierten Rassendiskurses zu sehen.

Meine Forschung baut auf diesen Interpretationen auf, allerdings behaupte ich, dass die Bedeutungen der Kannibalismusmetaphern weiter reichen. Ich

habe den Einsatz dieser Metaphern und der blutigen Rhetorik als eine Strategie der Abolitionisten interpretiert, den Konsum von Zucker mit einem untergehenden System, das nicht mit der Aufklärung vereinbar war, zu assoziieren. Sie repräsentierten einen unmoralischen Markt und das schlechte Gewissen der Europäer, hervorgerufen durch die enge Verknüpfung von Konsumgütern und Sklaverei. Die Metaphern verweisen nicht nur in Hinblick auf einen politischen und ökonomischen Systemwechsel auf einen Wandel. Sie vereinten aufkommende Hygienevorstellungen mit alten Bedeutungen der Magie des Blutes, die beide auf der Auffassung beruhten, dass die Aufnahme von menschlichen Substanzen den Körper und das Wesen eines Menschen ändern würde.

Die Verbindung der produzierenden und konsumierenden Körper verwies also auf eine ganze Reihe von Diskursen und stellte eine Verkörperung dieser Diskurse dar.

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Curriculum Vitæ

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Education

03/2008 – 03/2013 **Mag. phil.**, *University of Vienna*, Study of History, expected date of graduation 03/2013.
Title: Consuming the Bodies of Slaves. Metaphors of Cannibalism in British Anti-Slavery Campaigns to Abstain from West Indian Sugar in the 1790s, **Research Grant**: *Förderungsstipendium nach dem Studienförderungsgesetz (StudFG) vom BM.W_f finanziert* for a research trip to London in 2012, **Focus**: Global History and Cultural Studies

07/2006 **Summer School**, *Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti (Milan, Italy)*, Course Fashion Design, *Scholarship*.

2001 – 2006 **Matura (Graduation)**, *Fashion School Vienna Hetzendorf*, Higher-Level Vocational School, *Graduated with distinction*.

Work Experience

07/2009 – 04/2013 **Project Staff**, *Vienna University of Technology*, Duties: Translation (English/German) of scientific texts and publications, database management, Content Management System administration and homepage design.

05/2007 – 02/2008 **Trainee**, *Triumph International*, Wiener Neustadt, Austria, Duties: Process optimisation and product development.

01/2007 – 03/2007 **Internship**, *Fishbelly*, Berlin, Germany, Duties: Design and manufacturing of underwear.